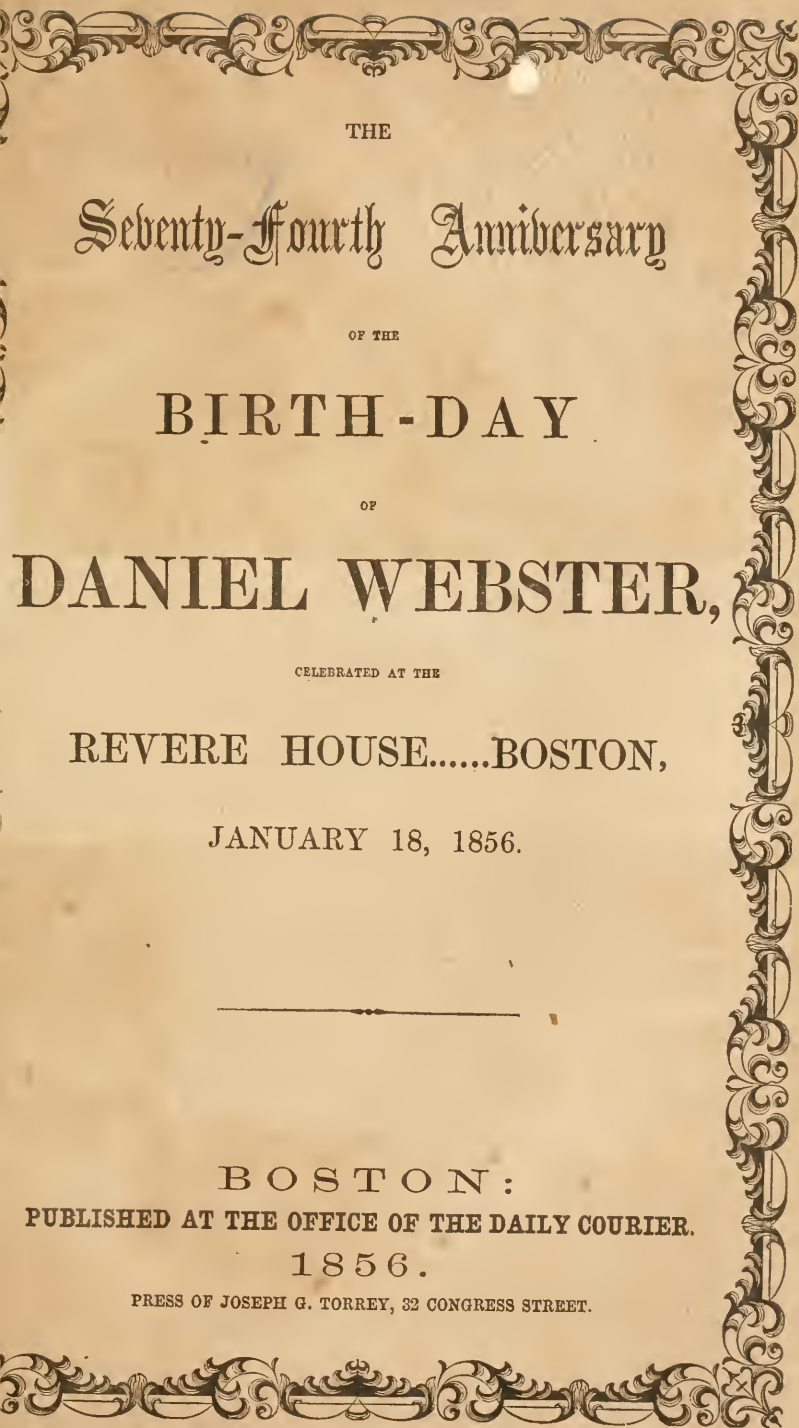


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THE

Seventy-Fourth Anniversary

OF THE

BIRTH-DAY

OF

DANIEL WEBSTER,

CELEBRATED AT THE

REVERE HOUSE.....BOSTON,

JANUARY 18, 1856.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DAILY COURIER.

1856.

PRESS OF JOSEPH G. TORREY, 32 CONGRESS STREET.



IN MEMORY
OF
DANIEL WEBSTER.



He is gone who seemed so great.
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.

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P R E F A C E .

IN compliance with a general wish that the proceedings and incidents of the WEBSTER BANQUET of 1856 should be preserved in a tangible form, I have collected them together, and caused them to be printed within these covers. The speeches have been revised by their authors and perhaps improved, if it were possible to improve performances so finished. The address of Mr. Everett, who presided at the dinner, was worthy of the speaker and worthy of the subject: and higher praise can hardly be accorded to it. It is a production not more remarkable for the splendor and eloquence of particular passages than for its general fidelity and accuracy as a delineation of Mr. Webster's heart and character, as they were revealed to his friends. It was delivered with an energy and animation which gave due force and expression to every excellence. The speeches of Messrs. Hillard, Nye, Schenck, Lord, and Sanborn are — considered as unstudied efforts — among the most eloquent and

appropriate tributes ever paid to the memory of Mr. Webster.

There was one vacant chair at the banquet table. Mr. Choate, who had prepared himself for the occasion, was taken quite ill in the afternoon, and was unable to attend. His letter to Mr. Harvey will be found among the proceedings of the evening.

In printing the names of the subscribers to the dinner it ought to be noted, in explanation, that the festival not being strictly public, and the hall at the Revere House of comparatively limited size, the tickets for the dinner were not on sale, and it was out of the power of many gentlemen who desired it, to obtain them.

J. C.

Boston Courier Office, }
February 22, 1856. }

SUBSCRIBERS TO THE BANQUET.

Edward Everett,
 William Appleton,
 Lewis W. Tappan,
 George B. Upton,
 Isaac Thacher,
 Franklin Haven,
 Charles H. Mills,
 Peter Butler, jun.
 Otis P. Lord,
 F. W. Lincoln,
 Wm. A. Crocker,
 David Sears,
 Wm. Dehon,
 James S. Amory,
 George Ashmun,
 Fletcher Webster,
 Wm. Amory,
 George R. Sampson,
 John S. Tyler,
 Tolman Willey,
 O. D. Ashley,
 William Thomas,
 Peter C. Brooks,
 T. H. Perkins,
 B. R. Keith,
 Wm. W. Tucker,
 George P. Upham,
 J. N. Fiske,
 Vernon Brown,

Rufus Choate,
 Samuel A. Eliot,
 Albert Fearing,
 D. Whiton,
 Saml. T. Dana,
 James K. Mills,
 H. K. Horton,
 M. H. Simpson,
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 Enoch Train,
 Charles Larkin,
 J. P. Healy,
 J. M. Beebe,
 James W. Paige,
 E. D. Sanborn,
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 Jarvis Slade,
 Chas. F. Bradford,
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 Albert F. Sise,
 Henry Upham,
 Wm. Davis, jun.,
 George Beaty Blake,
 B. K. Hough,

N. A. Thompson,
 James Read,
 C. C. Chadwick,
 George C. Richardson,
 David A. Simmons,
 Kirk Boott,
 Patrick Grant,
 Alanson Tucker, jun.
 R. W. Newton,
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 Edwd. E. Pratt,
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 Israel Whitney,
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 Henry L. Hallett,
 B. E. Bates,
 S. E. Guild,
 Charles Gordon,
 O. W. Holmes,
 A. S. Wheeler,
 F. O. Prince,
 George Ticknor,
 Melancthon Smith,
 Robt. M. Mason,
 Wm. T. Eustis,
 Saml. H. Gookin,
 George L. Pratt,
 H. C. Hutchins,
 George O. Whitney,
 Nathan Hale,

Otis Kimball,
 Sidney Brooks,
 Francis Bacon,
 E. D. Brigham,
 Robt. M. Morse,
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 Thomas Lamb,
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 G. Tuckerman, jun.,
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 J. W. Edmands,
 Harrison Ritchie,
 George S. Hillard,
 F. Skinner,
 Wm. C. Rives, jun.,
 E. Palmer, jun.
 D. F. M'Gilvray,
 E. F. Farrington,
 Wm. W. Greenough,
 E. F. Wilson,
 A. T. Hazard,
 E. R. Mudge,
 S. R. Spaulding,
 S. W. Marston, jun.,
 George B. Nichols,
 John Foster,

A. H. Rice,
 J. C. Boyd,
 Wm. G. Bates,
 Levi Brigham,
 George Bateman,
 E. B. Strout,
 Edward B. Everett,
 H. Sidney Everett,
 George W. Warren,
 Wm. F. Weld,
 James Lodge,
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 C. J. B. Moulton,
 Ebenezer Cutler,
 Homer Foot,
 Franklin Morgan,
 S. G. Snelling,
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E. P. Tileston,
 Wm. C. Ferris,
 E. G. Stanwood,
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 Henry Lyman,
 John Clark,
 Benj. P. Shillaber,
 J. B. Joy,
 Richd. Baker, jun.,
 Thomas Chickering,
 N. L. Frothingham,
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 Horace G. Hutchins,
 Chas. A. White,
 James W. Sever,
 C. P. Curtis,
 J. H. Eastburn,
 H. C. Deming,
 J. B. Bunrill,
 George T. Davis,
 R. M. Blatchford,
 Rev. C. Robbins,
Chaplain.



THE DINNER

Was served in the gentlemen's ordinary. In the reception-room were Hoyt's full length portrait of Webster, and Otis's full length portrait of Washington. The dinner tables were gorgeously and tastefully decorated with flowers and flags. Behind the President of the feast — the Hon. EDWARD EVERETT — was a portrait of Mr. Webster, painted by Ames, and at the other end of the hall, Clavenger's bust. Across the partition, on the right of the President's chair, was displayed this motto:

“While the Union lasts, we have high, exciting, gratifying prospects spread out before us, for us and our children. Beyond that, I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant that in my day, at least, that curtain may not rise! God grant that on my vision never may be opened what lies behind! When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union.”

Behind the President's chair was the following:

“Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre, not a stripe erased or polluted, nor a single star obscured; but everywhere spread all over

in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heavens,”

On the east wall of the hall was displayed — the continuation of the sentence from the same famous speech of Mr. Webster — these words :

“That sentiment dear to every American heart,— Liberty and Union, now and for ever, one and inseparable.”

Thirty-two flags were displayed on the tables, and a bouquet of flowers attended every plate. On the first (of the three tables) was the pillar of state, surmounted by a golden eagle ; on the base of the pillar were these mottos, taken from one of Mr. Webster’s replies to Mr. Calhoun :

“Yes, sir, I would act as if our fathers, who formed it for us, and who bequeathed it to us, were looking on me.”

“I would act, too, as if the eye of posterity was gazing on me.”

“I came into public life, sir, in the services of the United States. On that broad altar all my public vows have been made.”

“I move off under no banner not known to the whole American people, and to their constitution and laws.”

On the second table was a model of the mansion at Marshfield ; and on the third, an exact copy of the house in which Mr. Webster was born.

On the right hand of Mr. Everett were seated Fletcher Webster, Esq., Hon. R. H. Schenck of Ohio, Hon. George Ashmun of Springfield, Nathan Hale, Esq., James W. Paige, Esq.; and on his left hand, the Rev. Chandler Robbins, Hon. Samuel A. Eliot, Hon. David Sears, George Ticknor, Esq., and Hon. William Appleton. We also recognized, among those present, Hon. George S. Hillard, Hon. Otis P. Lord of Salem, Hon. George T. Davis of Greenfield, Dr. Oliver W. Holmes of Boston, Hon. Mr. Hazard of Connecticut.

Before dinner, the following prayer was offered by the Rev. Chandler Robbins:

“Almighty God, God of our fathers, our God and our King! Living by thy compassion, surrounded by thy goodness, overshadowed with thy mercy, we praise Thee, we worship Thee, we give glory to thy name.

“With joy and thankfulness we acknowledge the blessings Thou hast poured upon our country, and the favors with which Thou hast crowned our lives. We thank Thee for all the great, and wise, and good men who have contributed to the foundation, advancement, and harmony of the American Republic: but especially do we give thanks, at this hour, for the valuable services of that statesman and patriot whose memory we have met to revive and cherish in our hearts, and the influences of all whose wise counsels we seek to perpetuate for his country’s good, and his own just honor. We thank Thee for his printed works, so free from the stain of immoral sentiment, selfish ambition, and irreverent phrase, but crowded with wise and clear sentences — maxims, and oracles of constitutional liberty and political science.

“For all that was great, and useful, and laudable in his public and private life, we thank Thee, O God; though we put not our trust in man, and remember

that in thy sight the princes and judges of the earth are vanity.

“Attend and follow, we beseech Thee, with thy blessing these commemorative festivities. Fill our hearts with all pure and just sentiments, all liberal and patriotic affections. Purify, strengthen, and harmonize our Union. Let peace and righteousness dwell and grow together within our borders. Mercifully pardon our sins, accept our prayers, and help us all to live to thy glory, through our Blessed Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.”

The dinner was sumptuous. It was, perhaps, the most elegant public dinner ever given in Boston. When the courses were over, and the cloths removed for the dessert, the servants withdrew, leaving the hall undisturbed. A large number of ladies were now admitted into the grand entry, within sight and hearing. Mr. Everett rose at seven o'clock, and spoke thus:

SPEECH OF THE HON. EDWARD EVERETT.

Gentlemen,—I rise in pursuance of the object which has brought us together at this time; the only object, certainly, which, after long retirement from scenes of public festivity, would have induced me to occupy the chair in which you have placed me this evening. We have assembled on this, the anniversary of his birthday, to pay an affectionate tribute to one of the greatest and wisest and purest of the patriots, statesmen, and citizens of America. Still, my friends, I do not rise to pronounce the eulogy of Daniel Webster. That work was performed, at the time of his lamented decease, in almost every part of the country, and by a greater number of the distinguished writers and speak-

ers of the United States than have, in any former instance, with the single exception of Washington, paid this last office of respect to departed worth. It was in many cases performed with extraordinary ability; among others, especially, by gentlemen of more than one profession, who favor us with their presence on this occasion, whose performances, besides doing noble justice to their great theme, will take a permanent place in the literature of the country. In their presence I rise for no such presumptuous purpose; before this company I rise for no such superfluous attempt, as that of pronouncing a formal eulogy on the public character and services of the great man to whose precious memory we consecrate the evening.

On the contrary, gentlemen, on this occasion and in this circle of friends, most of whom, in a greater or less degree of intimacy, were individually known to to him, and had cultivated kindly personal relations with him, I wish rather to speak of the MAN. Let us to-night leave his great fame to the country's, to the world's care. It needs not our poor attestation; it has passed into the history of the United States, where it will last and bloom forever. The freshly remembered presence of the great jurist, invisible to the eye of sense, still abides in our tribunals; the voice of the matchless orator yet echoes from the arches of Faneuil Hall. If ever it is given to the spirits of the departed to revisit the sphere of their activity and usefulness on earth, who can doubt that the shade of Webster returns with anxiety to that Senate which so often hung with admiration upon his lips, and walks by night an unseen guardian along the ramparts of the capitol? Of what he was and what he did, and how he spoke

and wrote and counselled, and persuaded and controlled and swayed in all these great public capacities, his printed works contain the proof and the exemplification; recent recollection preserves the memory; and eulogy, warm and emphatic, but not exaggerated, has set forth the marvellous record. If all else which in various parts of the country has been spoken and written of him should be forgotten, (and there is much, very much that will be permanently remembered,) the eulogy of Mr. Hillard pronounced at the request of the city of Boston, and the discourse of Mr. Choate delivered at Dartmouth College,—whose great sufficiency of fame it is to have nurtured two such pupils,—have unfolded the intellectual, professional, and public character of Daniel Webster, with an acuteness of analysis, a wealth of illustration, and a splendor of diction, which will convey to all coming time an adequate and vivid conception of the great original.

Ah, my friends, how little they knew of him, who knew him only as a public man; how little they knew even of his personal appearance, who never saw his countenance except when darkened with the shadows of his sometimes saddened brow, or clothed with the terrors of his deep, flashing eye! These at times gave a severity to his aspect, which added not a little to the desolating force of his invective and the withering power of his sarcasm, when compelled to put on the panoply of forensic or parliamentary war. But no one really knew even his personal appearance who was not familiar with his radiant glance, his sweet expression, his beaming smile, lighting up the circle of those whom he loved and trusted, and in whose sympathy he confided!

Were I to fix upon any one trait as the prominent trait of his personal character, it would be his social disposition, his loving heart. If there ever was a person who felt all the meaning of the divine utterance, "it is not good that man should be alone," it was he. Notwithstanding the vast resources of his own mind, and the materials for self-communion laid up in the storehouse of such an intellect, few men whom I have known have been so little addicted to solitary and meditative introspection; to few have social intercourse, sympathy, and communion with kindred or friendly spirits been so grateful and even necessary. Unless actually occupied with his pen or his books, and coerced into the solitude of his study for some specific employment, he shunned to be alone. He preferred dictation to solitary composition, especially in the latter part of his life, and he much liked, on the eve of a great effort, if it had been in his power to reduce the heads of his argument to writing, to go over them with a friend.

Although it is not my purpose, as I have said, on this occasion to dwell on political topics, I may, in illustration of this last remark, observe that it was my happiness, at his request, to pass a part of the evening of the 25th January, 1830, with him; and he went over to me from a very concise brief the main topics of the speech prepared for the following day — the second speech on Foot's resolution, which he accounted the greatest of his parliamentary efforts. Intense anticipation, I need not remind you, awaited that effort, both at Washington and throughout the country. A pretty formidable personal attack was to

be repelled; New England was to be vindicated against elaborate disparagement; and, more than all, the true theory of the Constitution, as heretofore generally understood, was to be maintained against a new interpretation, devised by perhaps the acutest logician in the country; asserted with equal confidence and fervor; and menacing a revolution in the government. Never had a public speaker a harder task to perform; and except on the last great topic, which undoubtedly was familiar to his habitual contemplations, his opportunity for preparation had been most inconsiderable, — for the argument of his accomplished opponent had been concluded but the day before the reply was to be made.

I sat an hour and a half with Mr. Webster the evening before this great effort. The impassioned parts of his speech, and those in which the personalities of his antagonist were retorted, were hardly indicated in his prepared brief. So calm and unimpassioned was he, so entirely at ease and free from that nervous excitement which is almost unavoidable, so near the moment which is to put the whole man to the proof, that I was tempted, absurdly enough, to think him not sufficiently aware of the magnitude of the occasion. I ventured even to intimate to him, that what he was to say the next day would, in a fortnight's time, be read by every grown man in the country. But I soon perceived that his calmness was the repose of conscious power. The battle had been fought and won within, upon the broad field of his own capacious mind; for it was Mr. Webster's habit first to state to himself his opponent's argument in its

utmost strength, and having overthrown it in that form, he feared the efforts of no other antagonist. Hence it came to pass that he was never taken by surprise, by any turn of the discussion. Besides, the moment and the occasion were too important for trepidation. A surgeon might as well be nervous, who is going to cut within a hair's breadth of a great artery. He was not only at ease, but sportive and full of anecdote; and, as he told the Senate playfully the next day, he slept soundly that night on the formidable assault of his accomplished adversary. So the great Condé slept on the eve of the battle of Rocroi; so Alexander the Great slept on the eve of the battle of Arbela; and so they awoke to deeds of immortal fame. As I saw him in the evening, (if I may borrow an illustration from his favorite amusement,) he was as unconcerned and as free of spirit as some here present have often seen him, while floating in his fishing boat along a hazy shore, gently rocking on the tranquil tide, dropping his line here and there, with the varying fortune of the sport. The next morning, he was like some mighty Admiral, dark and terrible; casting the long shadow of his frowning tiers far over the sea, that seemed to sink beneath him; his broad pendant streaming at the main, the stars and the stripes at the fore, the mizzen, and the peak; and bearing down like a tempest upon his antagonist, with all his canvas strained to the wind, and all his thunders roaring from his broadsides.

Do not wonder, my friends, that I employ these military illustrations. I do so partly because, to the imaginations of most men, they suggest the liveliest

conceptions of contending energy and power; partly because they are in themselves appropriate—

“Peace hath her victories
Not less renowned than war.”

On the two sides of this great parliamentary contest there were displayed as much intellectual power, as much moral courage, as much elevation of soul, as in any campaign, ancient or modern. And from the wars of those old Assyrian kings and conquerors, whose marble effigies, now lying on the floor of Mr. William Appleton's warehouse, after sleeping for twenty-five hundred years on the banks of the Tigris, have, by the strange vicissitudes and changes of human things, been dug up from the ruins of Nineveh and transported across the Atlantic—a wonder and a show,—I say from the wars of Sennacherib and Nimrod himself, whose portraits, for aught I know to the contrary, are among the number, down to that now raging in the Crimea, there never was a battle fought whose consequences were more important to humanity, than the maintenance or overthrow of that constitutional Union which, in the language of Washington, “makes us one people.” Yes, better had Alexander perished in the Granicus, better had Asdrubal triumphed at the Metaurus, better had Nelson fallen at the mouth of the Nile or Napoleon on the field of Marengo, than that one link should part in the golden chain which binds this Union together, or the blessings of a peaceful confederacy be exchanged for the secular curses of border war.

That strong social disposition of Mr. Webster of

which I have spoken, of course, fitted him admirably for convivial intercourse. I use that expression in its proper etymological sense, pointed out by Cicero in a letter to one of his friends, and referred to by Mr. Webster in a charming note to Mr. Rush, in which he contrasts the superior refinement of the Roman word *convivium*, living together, with the Greek *symposium*, which is merely drinking together. Mr. Webster entered most fully into the sentiment of Cicero, so beautifully expressed in the letter alluded to:—“Sed, mehercule, mi Poëte, extra jocum, moneo te, quod pertinere ad beate vivendum arbitror; ut cum viris bonis, jucundis, amantibus tui vivas. Nihil aptius vitæ; nihil ad beate vivendum accommodatius. Nec id ad voluptatem refero, sed ad communitatem vitæ et victus, remissionemque animorum, quæ maxime sermone efficitur familiari, qui est in convivio dulcissimus, ut sapientius nostri quam Græci; illi συμπόσια, aut σύνδειπνα, id est computationes aut concœnationes: nos convivia; quod tum maxime simul vivitur.”* Mr. Webster loved to live with his friends, with “good, pleasant men who loved him.” This was his delight, alike when oppressed with the multiplied cares of

* Epist. ad Divers. IX., 24:—“But, without a joke, my dear Pœtus, I would advise you to spend your time in the society of a set of worthy and cheerful friends; as there is nothing, in my estimation, that more effectually contributes to the happiness of human life. When I say this, I do not mean with respect to the sensual gratifications of the palate, but with regard to that pleasing relaxation of the mind, which is best produced by the freedom of social converse, and which is always most agreeable at the hour of meals. For this reason the Latin language is much happier, I think, than the Greek, in the term it employs to express assemblies of this sort. In the latter they are called by a word which signifies *computations*, whereas in ours they are more emphatically styled *convivial meetings*; intimating that it is in a communication of this nature, that life is most truly enjoyed.” Melmoth XIII., 9.

office at Washington, and when enjoying the repose and quiet of Marshfield. He loved to meet his friends at the social board, because it is there that men most cast off the burden of business and thought; there, as Cicero says, that conversation is sweetest; there that the kindly affections have the fullest play. By the social sympathies thus cultivated, the genial consciousness of individual existence becomes more intense. And who that ever enjoyed it can forget the charm of his hospitality, so liberal, so choice, so thoughtful? In the very last days of his life, and when confined to the couch from which he never rose, he continued to give minute directions for the hospitable entertainment of the anxious and sorrowful friends who came to Marshfield.

If he enjoyed society himself, how much he contributed to its enjoyment in others! His colloquial powers were, I think, quite equal to his parliamentary and forensic talent. He had something instructive or ingenious to say on the most familiar occasion. In his playful mood he was not afraid to trifle; but he never prosed, never indulged in common place, never dogmatized, was never affected. His range of information was so vast, his observation so acute and accurate, his tact in separating the important from the unessential so nice, his memory so retentive, his command of language so great, that his common table-talk, if taken down from his lips would have stood the test of publication. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous, and repeated or listened to a humorous anecdote with infinite glee. He narrated with unsurpassed clearness, brevity, and grace, — no tedious, unnecessary details

to spin out the story, the fault of most professed *raconteurs*, — but its main points set each in its place, so as often to make a little dinner-table epic, but all naturally and without effort. He delighted in anecdotes of eminent men, especially of eminent Americans, and his memory was stored with them. He would sometimes briefly discuss a question in natural history, relative for instance to climate, or the races, and habits and breeds of the different domestic animals, or the various kinds of our native game, for he knew the secrets of the forest. He delighted to treat a topic drawn from life, manners, and the great industrial pursuits of the community; and he did it with such spirit and originality as to throw a charm around subjects which, in common hands, are trivial and uninviting. Nor were the stores of our sterling literature less at his command. He had such an acquaintance with the great writers of our language, especially the historians and poets, as enabled him to enrich his conversation with the most apposite allusions and illustrations. When the occasion and character of the company invited it, his conversation turned on higher themes, and sometimes rose to the moral sublime. He was not fond of the technical language of metaphysics, but he had grappled, like the giant he was, with its most formidable problems. Dr. Johnson was wont to say of Burke, that a stranger who should chance to meet him under a shed in a shower of rain would say, "this was an extraordinary man." A stranger, who did not know Mr. Webster, might have passed a day with him in his seasons of relaxation, without detecting the jurist or the statesman, but he

could not have passed a half an hour with him, without coming to the conclusion that he was one of the best informed of men.

His personal appearance contributed to the attraction of his social intercourse. His countenance, frame, expression, and presence arrested and fixed attention. You could not pass him unnoticed in a crowd; nor fail to observe in him a man of high mark and character. No one could see him and not wish to see more of him, and this alike in public and private. Notwithstanding his noble stature and athletic development in after life, he was in his childhood frail and tender. In an autobiographical sketch taken down from his dictation, he says: "I was a weak and ailing child and suffered from almost every disease that flesh is heir to. I was not able to work on the farm." This it was, which determined his father, though in straightened circumstances, to make the effort to send Daniel to college; because, as some said, "he was not fit for any thing else." His brother Joe, "the wit of the family," remarked that "it was necessary to send Dan to school to make him equal to the rest of the boys."

It was a somewhat curious feature of New England life at that time, not wholly unknown now, that it was thus owing to his being "a weak and ailing child," that Mr. Webster received in youth the benefit of a college education. This inversion of the great law of our nature, which requires in the perfect man "a sound mind in a sound body," was, I suppose, occasioned by the arduous life required to be led by the industrious yeoman in a new country. Whatever was the cause,

in a large family of sons the privilege of a "public education," as it was called, was usually reserved for the narrow-chested, pale-faced Benjamin of the flock, the mother's darling. In consideration of showing symptoms of tendency to pulmonary disease, he was selected for a life of hard study and sedentary labour, flickered awhile in the pulpit, and too often crept before he was fifty to a corner of his own church yard.

Mr. Webster, by the blessing of Providence, overcame the infirmities of his childhood, and although not long subjected to the hardships of the frontier, grew up in the love of out-door life, and all the manly and healthful pursuits, exercises, and sports of the country. Born upon the verge of civilization,—his father's house the farthest by four miles on the Indian trail to Canada,—he retained to the last his love for that pure fresh nature in which he was cradled. The dashing streams, which conduct the waters of the queen of New Hampshire's lakes to the noble Merrimac; the superb group of mountains (the Switzerland of the United States) among which those waters have their sources; the primeval forest, whose date runs back to the twelfth verse of the first chapter of Genesis, and never since creation yielded to the settler's axe; the gray buttresses of granite which prop the eternal hills; the sacred alternation of the seasons, with its magic play on field and forest and flood; the gleaming surface of lake and stream in summer; the icy pavement with which they are floored in winter; the verdure of spring, the prismatic tints of the autumnal woods, the leafless branch

es of December, glittering like arches and corridors of silver and crystal in the enchanted palaces of fairy land; sparkling in the morning sun with winter's jewelry, diamond and amethyst, and ruby and sapphire; the cathedral aisles of pathless woods, — the mournful hemlock, the “cloud-seeking” pine, — hung with drooping creepers, like funeral banners pendent from the roof of chancel or transept over the graves of the old lords of the soil; — these all retained for him to the close of his life an undying charm.

But though he ever clung with fondness to the wild mountain scenery amidst which he was born and passed his youth, he loved nature in all her other aspects. The simple beauty to which he had brought his farm at Marshfield, its approaches, its grassy lawns, its well-disposed plantations on the hill-sides, unpretending but tasteful, and forming a pleasing interchange with his large corn fields and turnip patches, showed his sensibility to the milder beauties of civilized culture. He understood, no one better, the secret sympathy of nature and art, and often conversed on the principles which govern their relations with each other. He appreciated the infinite bounty with which nature furnishes materials to the artistic powers of man, at once her servant and master; and he knew not less that the highest exercise of art is but to imitate, interpret, select and combine the properties, affinities and proportions of nature; that in reality they are parts of one great system: for nature is the Divine Creator's art, and art is rational man's creation. The meanest weed and the humblest zoophyte is a most wondrous work of a more than human art, and a chronometer or an

electric telegraph is no dead machine, but a portion of the living and inscrutable powers of nature — magnetism, cohesion, elasticity, gravitation, — combined in new forms and skilfully arranged conditions, boxed up and packed away, if I may so express it, for his convenience and service, by the creative skill of man.

But not less than mountain or plain he loved the sea. He loved to walk and ride and drive upon that magnificent beach which stretches from Green Harbour all round to the Gurnet. He loved to pass hours, I might say days, in his little boat. He loved to breathe the healthful air of the salt water. He loved the music of the ocean, through all the mighty octaves deep and high of its far-resounding register; from the lazy plash of a midsummer's ripple upon the margin of some oozy creek to the sharp howl of the tempest, which wrenches a light house from its clamps and bolts, fathom deep in the living rock, as easily as a gardener pulls a weed from his flower border. There was, in fact, a manifest sympathy between his great mind and this world-surrounding, deep heaving, measureless, everlasting, infinite deep. His thoughts and conversation often turned upon it and its great organic relations with other parts of nature and with man. I have heard him allude to the mysterious analogy between the circulation carried on by veins and arteries, heart and lungs, and the wonderful interchange of venous and arterial blood, — that miraculous complication which lies at the basis of animal life, — and that equally complicated and more stupendous circulation of river, ocean, vapour, and rain, which from the fresh currents of the rivers fills the depths of the salt sea;

then by vaporous distillation carries the waters which are under the firmament up to the cloudy cisterns of the waters above the firmament; wafts them on the dripping wings of the wind against the mountain sides, precipitates them to the earth in the form of rain, and leads them again through a thousand channels, open and secret, to the beds of the rivers, and so back to the sea. He loved to contemplate the profusion of life in the ocean, from the scarcely animated gelatinous spark, which lights up the bow of the plunging vessel with its spectral phosphorescent gleam, through the vast varieties of fish that form so important a part of the food of man, up to the mighty monsters which wallow through its depths, from which they are dragged by the skill and courage of the whaleman, to light our dwellings; — a species of industry, by the way, first practised in this country in the waters of the old colony, and along this very beach and the adjoining shores.* Few persons, not professed men of science, were as well acquainted as Mr. Webster with the natural history of the sea. And then the all-important functions of the ocean in reference to the civilization and social progress, to the commercial and political relations of nations. You can easily see, my friends, by how many points of attraction a mind like his would be led to meditate on these subjects.

I remember with great distinctness a drive which I took with him upon that noble beach to which I have just alluded, in the summer of 1849. It was a rainy morning, and we were in an open chaise. Heavy clouds alternately lifting and sinking, hung over the

* N. A. Review, XXXVII, 100; Mass. Hist. Coll., First Series, III., 157.

water, and the wind was chilly for the season, from the north-east, but he enjoyed the drive. The state of public affairs was interesting at the commencement of a new administration, but not a word was said of politics. He talked principally of the scene before us, of the sea, dwelling upon some of the topics to which I have alluded. He did not like the epithet "barren," applied to the sea in Homer, as usually translated, and was gratified with the suggestion that there were other interpretations of the word more elevated and full of meaning. As we drove off the beach, being compelled to do so by the shower, he said, "when I am at Franklin, I think there is nothing like the rivers and mountains, and when I come to Marshfield, it seems to me there is nothing like the sea. There is certainly something in it which fills the mind, and which defies expression. Upon the whole, Byron was right:—

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture in the lonely shore,
 There is society where none intrudes
 By the deep sea, and music in its roar.
 I love not man the less, but nature more
 For these our interviews, in which I steal
 From all I may be and have been before,
 To mingle with the universe, and feel
 What I can ne'er express, but cannot all conceal."

Mr. Webster's keen relish for the beauties of nature gave a freshness to his perception of her every day occurrences, which, in consequence of their familiarity, are looked upon by most persons with indifference. Witness that beautiful letter on "the Morning" which has found its way into the papers. Surely never was

such a letter written before by a statesman in political life starting on a tour of observation. Spending but a single day in Richmond, he rises at four o'clock to survey the city in the gray of the morning, and returning to his lodgings at five o'clock, addresses that admirable letter to his friend and relative, Mrs. J. W. Paige, of Boston :

“It is morning, and a morning sweet, fresh, and delightful. Every body knows the morning in its metaphorical sense applied to so many objects and on so many occasions. * * * But the morning itself few people, inhabitants of cities, know any thing about. Among our good people of Boston, not one in a thousand sees the sun rise once in a year. They know nothing of the morning. Their idea of it is, that it is that part of the day which comes along after a cup of coffee and a beef-steak, or a piece of toast. With them morning is not an issuing of light, a new bursting forth of the sun, a new waking up of all that has life from a sort of temporary death, to behold again the works of God, the heavens and the earth. * * * The first faint streaks of light, the earliest purpling of the east which the lark springs up to greet, and the deeper and deeper coloring into orange and red, till at length the glorious sun is seen, ‘regent of day,’—this they never enjoy, for they never see.

“Beautiful descriptions of the sun abound in all languages, but they are the strongest perhaps in those of the East, where the sun is so often an object of worship. King David speaks of taking to himself the ‘wings of the morning.’ This is highly poetical and beautiful. The wings of the morning are the beams of the rising sun. Rays of light are wings. It is thus said that ‘the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings;’ a rising sun which shall

scatter life and health and joy throughout the universe." * *

"I know the morning, I am acquainted with it, and I love it, fresh and sweet as it is, a daily new creation breaking forth and calling all that have life and breath, and being to new adoration, new enjoyment and new gratitude."

But Mr. Webster's mind was eminently practical, and it was by no means through his taste and feelings alone that he entered into this intimate communion with nature. He allied himself to it by one of the chief pursuits of his life. Notwithstanding the engrossing nature of his professional and official duties, he gave as much time and thought to agriculture as is given by most persons to their main occupation. His two extensive farms at Franklin and Marshfield, the former the much loved place of his birth, the latter the scarcely less favored resort of which he became possessed in middle life, were carried on under his immediate superintendence,—not the nominal supervision of amateur agriculturists, leaving every thing, great and small, to a foreman; but a minute and intelligent supervision given to particulars, to the work of every week, and where it was possible every day; when at home by actual direction, and when absent by regular and detailed correspondence. In the large mass of Mr. Webster's letters, there is no subject more frequently treated or with greater interest than this, in his correspondence with his foremen and others in relation to his farms. Brought up on a New England farm, he knew something from the associations of his early days of old-fashioned husbandry; and in later life, observation, experi-

ment, and books had kept him up with the current of all the recent improvements.

With every department of husbandry,—the qualities of the soil, the great art of enriching it, to which modern chemistry has given such extension; the succession of crops and their comparative adaptation to our soil and climate; the varieties of animals, and their preference for draft, flesh, and the dairy; the construction and use of agricultural implements,—with all these subjects, in all their branches and details, he appeared to me as familiar as with the elementary principles of his profession. His knowledge of them was practical as well as theoretical, derived in part from experience, and actually applied by him in the management of his own farms. He had an especial fondness for fine live stock, and possessed admirable specimens of it, European and American. This taste never deserted him. On one of the last days of his life, he caused himself to be moved to a favorite bay-window, and after he had been employed with his friend and secretary (Mr. G. J. Abbot) in dictating a part of his will, he directed three favorite yoke of Styrian oxen to be driven up to his window, and having entered into a particular description of their age, breed, and history, gave directions for their being weighed and measured the following day. No subject attracted more of his attention in England than farming. The only public speech made by him in that country, of which a report has been preserved, was that made at the meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society at Oxford. His first

public address on his return to this country, delivered in the State House in Boston, contained the results of his observations on the agriculture of England.* Many of you, my friends, must have heard Mr. Webster converse on agricultural topics. I recollect on one occasion to have heard him explain the conditions which determine the limits within which the various cereal grains can be cultivated to advantage in Europe and America; unfolding the doctrine of isothermal lines, in connection with the various grains, some of which require a long summer and some a hot summer. His remarks on this subject, evidently thrown off without premeditation, would have enriched the pages of a scientific journal. On another occasion I remember to have heard him state with precision the descent of a favorite native breed of horses, with all the characteristic points of a good animal; and on another, the question relative to the indigenous origin of Indian corn. I name these familiar instances, which now occur to me, among the recollections of the social board. Several of you, my friends, could greatly enlarge the list.

In fact, whether as a citizen, a patriot, or a practical philosopher, Mr. Webster's mind was powerfully drawn to agriculture. Could he have chosen his precise position in life, I think it would have been that of an extensive landholder, conducting the operations of a large farm. At Oxford he said — "Whatever else may tend to enrich and beautify society, that which feeds and clothes comfortably the mass of man-

* Works, Vol. I., 435, 443.

kind should always be regarded as the *great foundation of national prosperity*." In the beginning of that address in the State House, to which I have referred, he said—"I regard agriculture as the *leading interest* of society. * * * I have been familiar with its operations from my youth, and I have always looked upon the subject with a lively and deep interest." At the meeting of the Norfolk Agricultural Society, at Dedham, (which Mr. Harvey recollects,) he called agriculture "the *main pursuit* of life." Weighty words from such a source! What Mr. Webster considered "the leading interest of society" and "the great foundation of national prosperity" might well occupy his time, his thoughts, and his profound attention. Before popular bodies he spoke of it in its economical relations; but in narrower circles and on proper occasions he delighted to dwell on its sublime philosophy.

And what worthier theme, my friends, can occupy the most exalted intellect; what subject is so well calculated to task the highest powers of thought? Where in the natural world do we come so near the traces of that ineffable Power, which, in the great economy of vegetation, hangs orchard and grove and forest with the pompous drapery of May, and strips them to their shivering branches in November; which lays out universal nature as we now behold her, cold and fair, in this great winding-sheet of snow, not to sleep the sleep of death, but to waken her again by the concert of birds and warbling brooks and the soft breezes of spring; and which, when man cries to Heaven for his daily

bread, instead of giving him a stone, smites the marble clods of winter all round the globe with his creative wand, and bids them bring forth grass for the cattle and herb for the service of man, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil that causeth his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth the heart of man.

I meant, gentlemen, to have said a word of the delight taken by Mr. Webster in the healthful and invigorating sports of the forest, the field, and the sea; with what keenness and success he followed them, how well he understood them. In these he found his favorite relaxation from the anxieties of office, and the labors of his profession. They were to him a *diversion*, in the proper sense of the word. They *diverted*, turned away, his mind from the great cares of life, and furnished him an exhilarating occupation, which, without mental strain, stimulated and refreshed his intellectual powers. To these sports he brought all the science and mastery which their nature admits. An apt pupil in the school of old Izaak Walton, he was entirely familiar with the angler's curious lore. The different kinds of fish that fill our waters — their habits, their resorts, their seasons, their relations to each other; the birds which frequent our shores, marshes, and uplands, with every variety of larger game, had been subjected by him to accurate investigation, particularly in reference to their points of resemblance to their European congeners. It was not easy to ask him a question upon any topic of this kind, to which a satisfactory reply was not ready.

I hope, my friends, you will not think I am dwelling on trifles. You all know how deeply the taste for these manly sports entered into Mr. Webster's character. The Americans, as a people, at least the professional and mercantile classes, and the other inhabitants of the large towns, have too little considered the importance of healthful, generous recreation. They have not learned the lesson contained in the very word, which teaches that the worn out man is *re-created*, made over again, by the seasonable relaxation of the strained faculties. The father of history tells us of an old king of Egypt, Amasis by name, who used to get up early in the morning, (but not earlier than Mr. Webster,) despatch the business, and issue the orders of the day, and spend the rest of the time with his friends, in conviviality and amusement. Some of the aged counsellors were scandalized, and strove by remonstrance to make him give up this mode of life. But No, said he, as the bow always bent will at last break, so the man, forever on the strain of thought and action, will at last go mad or break down. You will find this in the second book of Herodotus, in the one hundred and seventy-third section. Thrown upon a new continent, — eager to do the work of twenty centuries in two, the Anglo-American population has over-worked and is daily overworking itself. From morning to night, from January to December, brain and hands, eyes and fingers, — the powers of the body and the powers of the mind, are kept in spasmodic, merciless activity. There is no lack of a few tasteless and soulless

dissipations which are called amusements, but noble, athletic sports, manly out-door exercises, which strengthen the mind by strengthening the body, are too little cultivated in town or country.

Let me not conclude, my friends, without speaking of a still more endearing aspect of Mr. Webster's character, I mean the warmth and strength of his kindly natural affections. The great sympathies of a true generous spirit were as strongly developed in him as the muscular powers of his frame or the capacities of his mighty intellect. In all the gentle humanities of life he had the tenderness of a woman. He honored his parents, he loved brother and sister and wife and child, he cherished kinsman, friend and neighbour, the companions of boyhood, townsman, aged school-master, humble dependant, faithful servant, and cultivated all the other kindly instincts, if others there be, with the same steadiness, warmth and energy of soul with which he pursued the great material objects of life. Mere social complacency may have a selfish basis, but Mr. Webster's heart was "full of great love." * Religious conviction is an act of the understanding, but he bowed to the Infinite with the submissiveness of a child. With what tenderness he contemplated the place of his birth; how fondly he pointed to the site of the humble cottage where he first drew the breath of life; how he valued the paternal trees that shaded it; how his heart melted through life at the thought of the sacrifices made by his aged parent, — the hard working veteran of two wars, — to procure him an

* Spenser.

education; how he himself toiled till midnight with his pen in the least intellectual employment to secure that advantage to his older brother; how he cherished the fond sympathies of husband and father, how he sorrowed over the departed; how he planted his grief, if I may say so, in the soil of Marshfield, in designating the trees by the names of his beloved son and daughter; how beautiful the dedications in which he has consigned his friendships and his loves to immortality; how sublime and touching the pathos of his last farewells; how saint-like the meditations of his departing spirit; — how can I attempt to do justice to topics like these, whose sacredness shrinks from the most distant approach to public discussion! These were the pure fountains from which he drew not merely the beauty but the force of his character, every faculty of his mind and every purpose of his will, deriving new strength and fervor from the warmth of his heart.

But some one may ask, is this bright picture, like the portraits of Queen Elizabeth, without a shade; were there no spots upon the disc of this meridian sun? Was he at length

“That faultless monster which the world ne’er saw,”

or did he partake the infirmities of our common humanity? Did this great intellectual, emotional, and physical organization, amidst the strong action and reaction of its vast energies, its intense consciousness of power, its soaring aspirations, its hard struggles with fortune in early life, its vehement antagonisms of a later period, the exhilarations of

triumph, the lassitude of exertion, did it never, under the urgent pressure of the interests, the passions, the exigencies of the hour, diverge in the slightest degree from the golden mean, in which cloistered philosophy places absolute moral perfection? To this question, which no one has a right to put but an angel, whose serene vision no mote distempers; to which no one will expect a negative answer, but a Pharisee, with a beam in his eye big enough for the cross-tree of a synagogue, I make no response. I confine myself to two reflections: first, that, while contemporary merit is for the most part grudgingly estimated, the faults of very great men, placed as they are upon an eminence where nothing can be concealed, and objects of the most scrutinizing hostility, personal and political, are like the spots on the sun, to which I have compared them, seen for the most part through telescopes that magnify a hundred, a thousand times; and second, that in reference to questions that strongly excite the public mind, the imputed error is as likely to be on the side of the observer as of the observed. We learn from the Earl of Rosse, that the most difficult problem in practical science is to construct a lens which will not distort the body it reflects. The slightest aberration from the true curve of the specular mirror is enough to quench the fires of Sirius and break the club of Hercules. The motives and conduct, the principles and the characters of men buried deep in the heart, are not less likely to be mistaken than the lines and angles of material bodies. The uncharitableness of individuals and parties will

sometimes confound a defect in the glass with a blemish in the object. A fly hatched from a maggot in our own brain creeps into the tube, and straightway we proclaim that there is a monster in the heavens, which threatens to devour the sun.

Such, my friends, most inadequately sketched, in some of his private and personal relations, was Mr. Webster; not the jurist, not the senator, not the statesman, not the orator, but the man; and when you add to these amiable personal traits, of which I have endeavored to enliven your recollections, the remembrance of what he was in those great public capacities, on which I have purposely omitted to dwell, but which it has tasked the highest surviving talent to describe, may we not fairly say that, in many respects, he stood without an equal among the men of his day and generation? Besides his noble presence and majestic countenance, in how many points, and those of what versatile excellence, he towered above his fellows! If you desired only a companion for an idle hour, a summer's drive, an evening ramble, whose pleasant conversation would charm the way, was there a man living you would sooner have sought than him? But if, on the other hand, you wished to be resolved on the most difficult point of constitutional jurisprudence or public law, to whom would you have propounded it sooner than to him? If you desired a guest for the festive circle, whose very presence, when ceremony is dropped and care banished, gave life and cheerfulness to the board, would not your thought, while he was with us, have turned

to him? if your life, your fortune, your good name were in peril; or you wished for a voice of patriotic exhortation to ring through the land; or if the great interests of the country were to be explained and vindicated in the senate or the cabinet; or if the welfare of our beloved native land, the union of the States, peace or war with foreign powers, all that is dear or important for yourselves and your children were at stake, did there live the man, nay, did there *ever* live the man, with whose intellect to conceive, whose energy to enforce, whose voice to proclaim the right, you would have rested so secure? Finally, if, through the "cloud" of party opposition, sectional prejudice, personal "detraction," and the military availabilities which catch the dazzled fancies of men, he could have "ploughed his way," at the meridian of his life and the maturity of his faculties, to that position which his talents, his patriotism, and his public services so highly merited, is there a fair man of any party, who, standing by his honored grave, will not admit that, beyond all question, he would have administered the government with a dignity, a wisdom, and a fidelity to the Constitution, not surpassed since the days of Washington?

Two days before the decease of Daniel Webster, a gentle and thoughtful spirit touched to the finest issues, (Rev. Dr. Frothingham,) who knew and revered him, as who that truly knew him did not, contemplating the setting sun as he "shed his parting smile" on the mellow skies of October, and anticipating that a brighter sun was soon to set, which could rise no more on earth, gave utterance to his

emotions in a chaste and elevated strain, which I am sure expresses the feelings of all present:

“Sink, thou autumnal sun !

The trees will miss the radiance of thine eye,
Clad in their Joseph-coat of many a dye,
The clouds will miss thee in the fading sky ;
But now in other climes thy race must run,
This day of glory done.

“Sink, thou of nobler light !

The land will mourn thee in its darkling hour,
Its heavens grow gray at thy retiring power,
Thou shining orb of mind, thou beacon-tower !
Be thy great memory still a guardian might
When thou art gone from sight.”

This speech was frequently interrupted by applause, hearty and prolonged. At the close, the whole company rose, and cheered three times round. After a pause, Mr. Everett rose and said :

“Gentlemen ; It is with the greatest concern that I am obliged to state to you that we shall not be favored this evening with the company of one to whom you would have been so delighted to listen, I mean the Honorable Rufus Choate. It was his intention, until the last moment, to favor us with his presence — but he is severely ill, and unable to leave his residence. He has sent his deep regrets to the company ; and he has sent, also, what you will listen to with the greatest satisfaction, and that is a toast to the memory of DANIEL WEBSTER, which I ask you now to drink with me. Allow me to give it from the paper sent by Mr. Choate :

‘ The Memory of Mr. Webster — Dearer and more honored on every return of his Birthday, it will survive, and it can perish only with the Constitution and the Union — may they partake one immortality ! ’ ”

SPEECH OF THE HON. GEORGE S. HILLARD.

Mr. President, — I wish that it had been my lot to follow some other man. “ Who is he that cometh after a king ? ” I wish, too, that it had been my lot to represent some other man. To follow you, Mr. President, and to represent Mr. Choate, is a double burden too great for human shoulders to bear. I am sure that all who are present will feel with me that in this glittering circlet there is an empty socket, where Choate should be, but is not — that in this constellation there is an absent, not a lost, Pleiad whose light seems the brighter from its not being visible to the eye of sense.

Let me first express the regret which I feel — which we all feel — in the absence of our distinguished friend ; and let me crave your indulgence while I read a note from him, explaining the reasons why he cannot be with us :

“ My Dear Harvey, — I have struggled till this hour in the hope of being with you. All is over now, and I am in for a night of solitude and sickness. Let me have your sympathy that I cannot join this noble circle of Mr. Webster’s steadfast friends. Sympathize with me especially that I cannot hear the most eloquent of the living do such honor and justice as he alone can do to the most beloved of the recent dead. Let us all stand engaged to observe this an-

nual commemoration as a service not more of personal affection than public duty.

Your obedient servant,

4 P. M.

RUFUS CHOATE."

In rising to address you, I cannot entirely shake off a feeling of constraint, almost of embarrassment, arising from the contrast between the actual scene of festivity around us and the occasion which has given birth to it. All that meets the eye is suggestive of gay and joyous emotions. These brilliant lights — these delicate flowers — these graceful ornaments — this festive board — breathe the spirit of light-hearted enjoyment. They are consonant with that mood of mind in which the "bosom's lord sits light upon his throne," and the heart is thrown open to the entrance of airy and smiling fancies. But the occasion is of another mood. It is solemn and impressive; darkened with thoughts of mortality and overshadowed with a fresh sadness. Our loss is recent, and our sorrow is not yet mellowed by time. The admirers of Mr. Pitt, I believe, sometimes meet to commemorate the day of his birth; but to them Mr. Pitt is but a name and a symbol. But Mr. Webster does not lie so far in the past as to have become a purely historical personage. Ours is a personal loss and our grief has the sharpness and sting of a personal bereavement. We have seen his magnificent presence; we have heard his impressive voice; we have felt the pressure of his hand. The image of the man seems to brood over the whole scene. We have read stories of shadowy visitants, and of phantom guests that glide in on noiseless feet and

mingle in festive scenes. I have been conscious this evening of the mysterious presence of an unseen power — have seen the light of those dark eyes, and felt the shadow of that majestic brow.

The life of a man like Mr. Webster readily divides itself into two portions, his public and his private life. His public life is part of the history of the country; it is known to all men; and his friends calmly wait for the unbiassed judgment of the future upon his acts and his motives. But in his private life, much of which was only revealed to the friends who shared his closest confidence, there is abundant matter for meditation; and it appropriately supplies themes for us this evening. The world saw in Mr. Webster a great statesman, patriot, and orator; but many who sit around this board knew that in that large and imperial nature there were secluded regions into which the public did not enter, but which were full of attraction to those who were thus privileged. Trace the private life of Mr. Webster from its source in the woods of New Hampshire to its close at Marshfield — view him as a son, a brother, a husband, a father, a friend — and we see that each portion of it is linked by natural laws to what preceded and what followed. His whole being obeyed a natural and progressive law of development: in the present, at any moment, there were vital threads linking it to the past.

There were two elements, especially, that entered largely into the composition of Mr. Webster's nature; the strength and depth of his domestic affections and his love of nature and love of the soil. Without

going so far as the Athenians, who required the professional orators who discussed the matters laid before their popular assemblies to be married men and owners of landed property, it is certainly safe to say that these two elements contribute in no small measure to the worth and the value of a statesman. Compare Mr. Webster in these respects with those three great contemporaneous lights of English history, Burke, Fox, and Pitt. The only one of the three between whom and Mr. Webster, in these points, the parallel runs perfect is Burke. He was a lover of nature and a lover of agriculture. He was also a man of deep and strong domestic affections, as the pathos of those passages in his writings in which he speaks of the death of his son so well proves. No one who has read the writings of this great man can fail to recognize how much these traits of his contributed to their power and their enduring excellence. Pitt was a solitary man, with no warm affections; with little love for any thing but power, and little taste for any thing but business. The secret of his immense influence over his contemporaries seems to have been in his immense strength of will and in his power of cold, withering sarcasm; which pierced and penetrated but never warmed. The element of sympathy was not in him; nor were those instinctive perceptions and capacities which flow from it. Can any one doubt that he would have been not merely a happier man, but a better statesman, if he had a wife and children around him, and if he had had his father's taste for planting and gardening. The life of Fox, as

we all know, was for many years one of indulgence, and he at length married a woman whom he might love but could hardly respect. But he was a childless man. He, however, had one taste in common with Mr. Webster: he was a lover of nature; and never appeared to more advantage than in his charming retreat of St. Anne's Hill, where he might be seen, as one of his friends described him, "lounging about the garden with a book in his hand, watching the birds as they stole his cherries."

The life of Mr. Webster was an eminently New England life. It was made up of elements drawn from the soil and institutions of New England, and which could have been derived from no other source; and not only that, but from the soil and institutions of New England as they were fifty or sixty years ago. The child of to-day — the future Webster — born under corresponding circumstances, cannot have the same elements flow into his life, because New England is not now what it was then. Great changes have taken 'place during the last half century. Mr. Webster and his contemporaries, the strong men that came from the woods of New Hampshire and Vermont, seem to me a race of intellectual Scandinavians, that swarmed out from the frozen North, to reap the harvests of opportunity and pluck the clusters of success, in more genial fields.

There is a poem of Tennyson's which always seemed to me to have a peculiar application to Mr. Webster's life and fortunes. With your permission I will read it, as it is not long:

Dost thou look back on what has been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began,
 And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,
 And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known,
 And lives to clutch the golden keys
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on fortune's crowning slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream ;

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs,
 He played at Counsellors and Kings
 With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea,
 And reaps the labor of his hands ;
 And in the furrow musing stands —
 Does my old friend remember me ?

In reflecting upon Mr. Webster's fame and fortunes, the pictures and reflections of this poem have more than once recurred to me. He had early com-

panions and friends — rivals at the village school, and sharers in his boyish sports — with whom he talked of his future hopes and unformed plans — and whose life was passed in modest obscurity, while his arose to such glittering heights of renown and success. I can fancy one of these boyish friends gathering his family around him of a winter's evening, and reading aloud one of the great senator's speeches, and telling his children how he once sat upon the same bench with the orator, and then, dropping his paper upon his knees and asking himself the question: "I wonder if Daniel Webster remembers me?" We may be assured that Mr. Webster did remember the friends of his boyhood; for one of his most marked traits was his susceptibility to all those impressions which ran back to the opening dawn of his life. *That* chord in him was never touched without vibrating sweet sounds.

Mr. President, we are here to-night, called together by a sentiment of admiration for a great man, who did the state some service in his day. I hold this sentiment to be an honorable feeling, worthy of commendation and encouragement. Greatness is a gift of God, to be gratefully received and acknowledged; but some portion of that feeling which greatness itself inspires is due to a genuine and unselfish admiration of greatness. Nor is sincere and disinterested admiration for greatness so very common a thing. We owe to it, however, one of the most delightful books in the English language — Boswell's Life of Johnson. Every body reads this book, but most persons rise from its perusal with a feeling of

something like contempt for the author. We think he was rather a poor creature, who was willing to fawn upon Johnson and endure such indignities at his rough hands. But I think Carlyle took a truer and more generous view of the relation between them. He said that the admiration of Boswell — a gentleman born — for the intellectual greatness of the low-born Johnson was an estimable and even admirable trait, and that it raised him above the vulgar prejudices of his class and rank. Boswell's father, Lord Auchinleck, was a respectable Scotch judge, a whig and a Presbyterian; but he was full of the pride of birth and the pride of station, and he looked down upon Johnson as a plebeian adventurer. He called him "a dominie, that kept a school, and called it an academy." In my judgment Boswell's genuine and unselfish admiration of Johnson was a higher and nobler trait than the father's contempt for him, and that so far the former is set above the latter. Allow me, then, in bringing these remarks to a close, to condense what I have been saying into a sentiment:—Great men, the jewels of God — It is man's duty so to set them, that their light may shine before the world.

PRESIDENT EVERETT. — Our friend, (Mr. Hillard,) who has just taken his seat, has read a beautiful little poem of Tennyson's. It reminds me of an incident that occurred on one occasion when I happened to be at the Grand Opera of Naples. There was present a member of the British royal family, and out of compliment to him the band struck up "God

save the King." It happened that there were several American sailors in the house at the time, and after the band had got through with "God save the King," one of those jolly and true-hearted American tars cried out, *in English*, somewhat to the amazement of the Italians, who heard the stentorian cry from the gallery, without exactly knowing what it meant:—"You have played 'God save the King;' now give us 'Hail Columbia!'" (Laughter.) My friend Hillard has given us a very beautiful extract from Tennyson, but our good friend Dr. Holmes is among the company, and I am willing to pit him against the poet laureate, Tennyson, or anybody else. Mr. Hillard has given us Tennyson; now, I say, let us have Dr. Holmes. (Applause.)

THE POEM OF DR. HOLMES.

The band having played "Hail Columbia!" Dr. Holmes rose amid cheers, and delivered the following poem with his characteristic excellence of manner, and was repeatedly cheered as he proceeded:

When life hath run its largest round
 Of toil and triumph, joy and wo,
 How brief a storied page is found
 To compass all its outward show !

The world-tried sailor tires and droops ;
 His flag is dust, his keel forgot ;
 His farthest voyages seem but loops
 That float from life's entangled knot.

But when within the narrow space
 Some larger soul hath lived and wrought,

Whose sight was open to embrace
 The boundless realms of deed and thought ;

When stricken by the freezing blast,
 A nation's living pillars fall,
 How rich the storied page, how vast,
 A word, a whisper can recall !

No medal lifts its fretted face,
 Nor speaking marble cheats your eye,
 Yet while these pictured lines I trace,
 A living image passes by ;

A roof beneath the mountain pines ;
 The cloisters of a hill-girt plain ;
 The front of life's embattled lines ;
 A mound beside the heaving main.

These are the scenes ; a boy appears ;
 Let life's round dial in the sun
 Count the swift arc of seventy years,
 His frame is dust ; his task is done.

Yet pause upon the noontide hour,
 Ere the declining sun has laid
 His bleaching rays on manhood's power,
 And look upon the mighty shade.

No gloom that stately shape can hide,
 No change uncrown its brow ; behold !
 Dark, calm, large-fronted, lightning-eyed ;
 Earth has no double from its mould !

Ere from the fields by valor won
 The battle-smoke had rolled away,
 And bared the blood-red setting sun,
 His eyes were opened on the day.

His land was but a shelving strip,
 Black with the strife that made it free;
 He lived to see its banners dip
 Their fringes in the western sea.

The boundless prairies learned his name,
 His words the mountain echoes knew,
 The northern breezes swept his fame
 From icy lake to warm bayou.

In toil he lived; in peace he died;
 When life's full cycle was complete,
 Put off his robes of power and pride
 And laid them at his Master's feet.

His rest is by the storm-swept waves
 Whom life's wild tempests roughly tried,
 Whose heart was like the streaming caves
 Of ocean, throbbing at his side.

Death's cold, white hand is like the snow
 Laid softly on the furrowed hill,
 It hides the broken seams below,
 And leaves its glories brighter still.

In vain the envious tongue upbraids;
 His name a nation's heart shall keep
 Till morning's latest sunlight fades
 On the blue tablet of the deep!

MR. EVERETT. I think you will agree with me that
 "Hail Columbia" is about as good, this evening, as
 "God save the King." [Cheers.]

There are many gentlemen present, both natives of
 this and of other states, upon whom the Chair would
 be most happy to call — the only difficulty being that
 it is impossible to listen to more than one gentleman

at the same time. [Laughter.] The Chair is happy to be informed that there is a gentleman present who unites, to some extent, both capacities — a native of Massachusetts and of Cape Cod, a friend of Mr. Webster in earlier days, and a distinguished citizen of New York, who has afforded us some encouragement to hope that we shall have the pleasure of hearing from him this evening. If General Nye is within the sound of my voice, he will please come forward.

General Nye obeyed the summons, and spoke as follows:

SPEECH OF GENERAL NYE OF NEW YORK.

Mr. President and gentlemen, — I hardly know where to lay the blame of this infliction upon you. I mistrust my friend here [Peter Harvey, Esq.] and this friend [Hon. George Ashmun] that they have been instrumental in inflicting upon you, for a moment, a small speech from me. [Laughter.]

It is true, Mr. President, my feet first made tracks upon the sands of Cape Cod; but long ago, sir, — away back in the pathway of time, — a good mother, to keep me from the sea, that the great man whose memory you have met to-night to commemorate loved so well, found her way to the central part of New York, — upon an eminence, sir, that New Englanders always find, of 11,000 feet above tide water. I feel, sir, a strong presentiment that you have been imposed upon in introducing me as a “distinguished gentleman from the state of New York.” [Laughter.] I have no distinguishing

element in my character but a love for my native state, a love for the citizens of that state, and for the citizens of the state of my adoption, and of my country. [Applause.] But, sir, I am going to attempt to rob Massachusetts of some of the laurels she claims in the character of the distinguished man whose birthday you have met to commemorate. He belonged not to Massachusetts. He was not born within your borders. [Applause, and cries of "Good!"] He was born upon the rocks of New Hampshire, — a foundation as firm and unchanging as the character he bore. [Renewed applause.] He was not the property of Massachusetts — he belonged to the nation, — nay, he had a wider field, — he belonged to the world. [Enthusiastic cheering.]

Sir, my heart pulsed with youthful emotions as you spoke of the speech of speeches delivered by Mr. Webster in the contest upon constitutional rights with the most gallant son of the South. My youthful ear drank in that speech; and I see before me to-night, passing in beautiful panoramic view, the whole of that mighty and impressive scene. I saw the gallant Hayne, whose lips were touched by a live coal from the altar of eloquence, but I beheld him overthrown with one blast from the bugle horn of constitutional freedom. [Loud applause.] Sir, New York shares in the honor and the imperishable glory of Daniel Webster, and the far-off state that laves its feet in the waters of the Pacific shares in the honor and the fame of Webster. It remained for him to show the true basis upon which Constitutional freedom rested; and when this country was rocked to

its centre, when excitement had taken the place of reason, it was his majestic form, it was his commanding voice that said to the waters — “Peace, be still!” [Loud cheers.] Therefore, Mr. President, I am unwilling that Massachusetts alone should appropriate the honor and the glory of Webster. He was the nation’s property; and in that view, I do not feel exactly as though I was an interloper, although from another state, in appearing here on this occasion. [Applause.]

There is one thing, sir, that perhaps I ought to say. I never agreed with Mr. Webster politically. It is strange that a man of such might should not have been able to controul me — one so weak; but I was educated differently by a Democratic New England mother. [Cheers.] But never, *never* was there a moment when, if my vote would have elevated that man to the Chief Magistracy of the nation, that he would not have had it. [Prolonged cheering.]

Mr. President, perhaps I ought to stop here. [“Go on — go on!”] I share in the sentiment of admiration for Mr. Webster that has gathered this assembly together. I know that in his inmost heart the Union and the liberty of this country were the objects that he most fondly cherished. [Loud applause.] Sir, I, too, love the Union of my country, — I look to it as he did, as the harbinger to the peace, happiness, and prosperity of my country. The Union, sir, will ever exist. It is cemented to its centre by revolutionary blood. (Cheers.) It is bound around by the affections of twenty millions of freemen, and it is adequate, and will be, to the exigencies that now exist

or may hereafter arise. (Loud applause.) Sir, if there is a place on earth that should bend all its energies to preserve the Union, it is Boston. That mighty spire that stands here in sight rests upon revolutionary bones. Here in Boston was the first revolutionary blood spilt;— the inscription was made here, the quit-claim was written at Yorktown. (Great cheering.) It was written, Mr. President, in the best blood of our Revolutionary fathers. Let the waves of excitement dash and break, let them scatter their spray on every hand, yet, like the rock on a serf-beaten coast, this Union will stand. (Enthusiastic applause.)

Sir, I was an admirer of the character of Daniel Webster. I remember with youthful emotion the time when I used to sail in his little bark upon the sea you have said he loved so well; and I have now a bright silver dollar that he gave me the day I was eleven years old. (Applause.) I have told my wife not to be dismayed at all at the thought of coming to want—I should never be out of money. (Laughter.) The dollar shall abide with me until time shall be, to me, no more. (Applause.) It is, sir, the anchor of my financial ship. I have often been reduced to that, but I have never yet been obliged to let it go. (Cheers.) I drank in, as the youthful ear will always drink in, the accents of wisdom, many of the sayings of that wise man, which I shall never forget. Sir, he was a boy. He could accommodate himself to the capacity of a boy, and made himself perfectly familiar with the unlettered oarsman that plied at the oar as he directed. That

is no evidence that he was not a man—is it? Boyhood and youth are the foundation of manhood, and he had that foundation deeply laid; and what a beautiful superstructure did he rear upon it! (Loud applause.) Sir, it is a custom that has the sanction of ages for men to meet in commemoration of the birth of distinguished men; and I rejoice to see here, the home and hearthstone of Webster, that you meet to commemorate the birthday of a man that fills a larger space in the civil history of our country than any man, living or dead. (Prolonged cheering.) Hail, then, Massachusetts, that you were the abiding-place of a Webster! I greet you here, and rejoice with you that you shared so largely in the glory and honor of his services and his name! (Great applause.)

Sir, I want to say one thing more—if I may be excused. I have sometimes thought that Massachusetts, *as Massachusetts*, was a little ungrateful to the memory of this great man. Sir, if Massachusetts should strike a balance in her account with the lamented Webster, she would owe him countless millions. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) Let Massachusetts, sir, come here to-night, and lay her treasures before you, and he has earned them all. (Renewed cheering.)

A VOICE. Massachusetts will pay.

General NYE. Massachusetts *ought to pay!* (Applause.) Sir, I have been a little gratified that I left Massachusetts before she passed these criticisms upon Daniel Webster. “Nothing beautiful but truth,” is the Spanish proverb. (“Good!”)

Mr. President, it is unfair that I should have been called upon to address this assembly after they had listened to your voice, to whose Athenian tones these ears that were accustomed to harsher notes have listened with delight, — it was unkind that, after the classic Hillard and my poetic friend Holmes, that I sir, who graduated at the plough handle, should be called in as background to complete the picture. (Loud laughter and applause.) But, sir, I could not withdraw. I hardly knew what it meant, sir, when my friend Ashmun called on me to-day, and with even more than his ordinary seductiveness, insisted upon it and wrung from me the promise that I would dine with him, and when he ushered me into the august presence of this assembly, and when I saw yourself in the position of presiding officer, I said, “Ashmun, save me from my friends.” (Laughter.) Then, sir, I began to suspect what it all meant; but I promise you — and I will see that that promise is fulfilled — that George Ashmun shall share the same mortification. (Laughter and applause.)

THE PRESIDENT. I think when our friend tells us he graduated at the plough handle, and contrasts his diploma with that of my friends Hillard and Holmes, myself and the rest of us who went to college, he but furnishes another proof of the justness of the idea to which I have before alluded, that Mr. Webster was sent to college, in the opinion of some persons, because he was not good for anything else. (Laughter.) I do not see what the use of going to college is. (Renewed merriment.) The gentleman

tells us that he is not a "distinguished citizen" of New York. If that is the case, I say, so much the worse for New York. (Laughter and applause.) However, gentlemen, I can assure our friend, General Nye, that I will take care to carry into effect his plot against Mr. Ashmun before I have done with him. In the mean time the respect that is due to gentlemen from other states requires me not to forget that we have here a distinguished citizen from Ohio—a gentleman who well knew Mr. Webster and honored and loved him. Allow me to introduce to you the Hon. R. H. Schenck of Ohio.

SPEECH OF MR. SCHENCK.

Mr. Schenck said he came to listen, and had no expectation that he should be called upon to take any part in the festivities of the occasion, further than to share in the general gratification of all present. However, as he had been called up, he would be doing injustice to his own feelings if he failed to express the deep satisfaction he had experienced in uniting with them in doing honor to that great man who has gone from among us, if he did not say with what more than ordinary emotion he had listened to the remarks of the gentlemen who had preceded him, and particularly to those of the President, whose delineation of the character of Mr. Webster he alluded to as marked with an eloquence so fervid, with a poetry so beautiful, that would make that speech one of the epics of the land.

Mr. Schenck said he united with his friend from New York in protesting against anything that should look like an exclusive claim on the part of New England to the fame of Mr. Webster. Mr. Webster belonged to them all; and he could never forget, while Minnesota and Florida, and Massachusetts, and other "border" states, were claiming that Mr. Webster belonged to them, the centre of the country throbs also for him. He (Mr. S.) was not in this country when the news first went over this land and the wide world that Daniel Webster was gone. At that time he was in another hemisphere, partly from the act and with the assent of Mr. Webster himself, and perhaps that fact gave him an opportunity of seeing the effect upon the mind of this nation and the world better than those who made a part in the scene in which that event transpired. He could testify that when that sun went down, it shed a gloom not merely over this land, but a shadow was cast over the wide world. When people abroad spoke of this sad event, they did not allude to Mr. Webster as a citizen of Massachusetts, or a native of New Hampshire, then lately deceased, nor as a man whose residence was at the North or the South, the East or the West, —they felt that a great *American* was no more. (Applause.)

He would draw an illustration from the backwoods from whence he came. If they stood in the forest, what did they see? Some giant oak lifting its mighty branches to the clouds, and bathing them in the dews of heaven; some tall

symmetrical maple, with its cone-shaped top, stretching far up; some cloud-reaching pine, or some humbler trees of the forest. Looking at them, they saw each with its individual peculiarities and characteristics; but if they looked at the woods from a distance, they saw a green and glorious forest, in which there is no distinguishing trees one from another. So it was with our Union; so may it ever be! May we be able to make each tree of that forest forever a Liberty Tree, around which we may all rally together! (Prolonged cheering.) My word for it, said Mr. Schenck, no surer way of securing this sentiment in the public mind of this country can possibly be found, than by remembering, at all times, the glorious sentiments of the man whose birthday we are met to commemorate. (Loud applause.)

The PRESIDENT. Now, gentlemen, I rise to fulfil my compact with General Nye, and call upon the Honorable George Ashmun — a warm, devoted, able friend of Mr. Webster, in public and private, at all times, in all companies, on all occasions.

SPEECH OF MR. ASHMUN.

Mr. Ashmun, on coming forward, was greeted with vociferous applause, followed by three hearty and unanimous cheers. He said that he had no doubt that whenever the President should call for a response from one whom he pronounced to be a faithful

friend of Mr. Webster, there would be a hearty cheer from such an assemblage of faithful friends as this; he thanked them for that cheer; he claimed only to have been a faithful friend of Mr. Webster, living and dead, and with that tribute from a Massachusetts audience he would be content. He was faithful to him because he loved him — loved him for his great character, public and private, and few men, he would venture to say, knew that character better than he did. He was glad to stand here as one of Mr. Webster's friends, to give his testimony, feeble though it might be, to his memory. The President, in an elaborate, beautiful, artistical manner, had portrayed to the assembly the characteristics of that great man; he (Mr. Ashmun) was not to repeat those words, to add to them, and he hoped not to diminish or weaken them; all he desired to say was, that among the richest recollections of his life, those that he cherished as the most precious were the recollections of the confidence and trust that that great man was kind enough to give to him.

Mr. Ashmun said he was glad to add his hearty tribute to the homage which was offered to the great heart which now lay buried at Marshfield. If there could be anything finer or more beautiful, — if there could be anything in which the heart could join more religiously than this manifestation, let him hear it, and whether in the church or in the forum, in temple or in field, he would make a pilgrimage to join in it. He firmly believed that this homage paid to Mr. Webster on the anniversary of his birth was a guaranty for the safety of the nation.

In conclusion, Mr. Ashmun said he did not expect to be called upon to address that assembly, but he was never at liberty to be silent upon an occasion when the memory or character of Mr. Webster was to be considered. He had something to do with him, and he hoped it was not a presumptuous boast, both in public and private, and he would declare to them that there was nothing human which was cherished with so much reverence in his heart as the character of Mr. Webster. (Applause.)

HON. GEORGE S. HILLARD here took the chair and said: — Our distinguished chairman, after the fatigues of this evening, has withdrawn, to seek that rest which we all feel he has so fairly earned. I think I do no more than express the feelings of gratitude that throb in the bosoms of all, when I propose as a sentiment —

Edward Everett — The statesman, the orator, the patriot, the Elisha upon whom the mantle of our departed Elijah has fallen. [Loud cheers.]

Gentlemen, it is perfectly true that, although we meet here merely as citizens of Boston, we, as such, have no right to any monopoly in the fame and character of Mr. Webster; for, if there be any one thing that, more than another, marked that illustrious man, it was the breadth and comprehensiveness of his patriotism, and his scorn of every thing narrow, sectional, local. We have heard from Ohio and from New York tributes worthy of his greatness: I am happy to say that a nearer state, a

New England state, is here represented by a worthy son, who, I am sure, feels a sentiment in unison with the prevailing tone of this evening. I will ask you to give your attention when I call upon the Hon. H. C. Deming, Mayor of Hartford, to speak in behalf of Connecticut.

SPEECH OF THE HONORABLE HENRY C. DEMING, OF
CONNECTICUT.

Mr. President, — Connecticut and Massachusetts are old allies. Civilization had scarcely planted its footsteps around this harbor, when you sent out a colony to gladden with its presence the loveliest of rivers and the fairest of landscapes. We come here from Connecticut to hail Massachusetts as our mother. All hail to thee, great parent of states, in whose waters the first puritan keel was laid — on whose shores the Indian first met his deity — Civilization. That civilization you dispensed to us, and that alliance, thus formed, has been close, uninterrupted, and continual. During the long and bloody war with the Indians, these two states mutually assisted and protected each other against the foe, and through the revolution they marched, shoulder to shoulder, and arm in arm.

Besides this, Massachusetts has done more for us still, and I cannot hear the name of Webster, without remembering that, in all our interests — commercial, agricultural, and national — we leaned and fell back upon his great arm, and I devoutly believe that we owe it to him that we and the

sisterhood of states are still blended in a common harmony. Why, sir, there is no state in the Union where the heart, the character, and the fame of Daniel Webster are more closely bound around the heart of the people than in Connecticut.

We were ready to enter into any canvass when his name should be emblazoned on the flag; and I think it becomes both Massachusetts and Connecticut, in this period of trial, to utter, not in fear but in hope, the great petition which closed his speech to Hayne — “When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in the heavens, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union — on states discordant, dissevered, belligerent — on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched in fraternal blood; but let their last feeble glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre, not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured; bearing in its motto no such interrogatory as ‘What is all this worth?’ or those other words of delusion, ‘Liberty first and Union afterwards,’ but streaming all over in characters of living light, blazing in all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, in every wind under the whole heaven, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart, ‘Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.’”

SPEECH OF HON. OTIS P. LORD.

Mr. Lord said:—

He yielded to the call upon him,—wholly unexpected, and finding him therefore wholly unprepared,—mainly to express his sympathy with the universal sentiment of the assembly, of sincere regret, that the distinguished friend of Mr. Webster, (Mr. Choate,) who had been struggling for two days against sickness and disease that he might be here to-night, has at last been obliged to abandon his purpose. He knew how anxiously that gentleman hoped to be here—how he had made more than his accustomed preparation—how we all should have been delighted—even beyond our want—to listen to his thoughts of beauty and wisdom—as they dropped, or rather as they were cast, glittering and sparkling from his lips. Providentially, he is prevented from being here;—and the company will hardly be obliged to you, sir, for making his absence the more painfully felt.

Mr. Lord added, that he had hardly been personally acquainted with Mr. Webster;—that it was his misfortune to have had but few personal interviews with him, and was but little familiar with his private life; but he admired and venerated him as every man who understood him, though feebly,—venerated and admired him. It was fitting and proper that this day should be set apart to do him honor.

The Fourth of July is immortal—for on that day a nation was born. The Twenty-Second of February is immortal, for then a Washington was born—but who else than Webster ever immortalized by a single act

any day in the calendar? No man to-day hears the Seventh of March named without associating with it Mr. Webster and the renown of the country.

Mr. Webster once said something like this: I speak Mr. Lord said, from memory—"There are those now living whose presence it was enough to speak of the nineteenth of April, without mentioning the year"—instantly, 1775, and the battle of Lexington were brought to mind; and so to-day—the mention of the seventh of March brings at once to mind that terrible agitation of public affairs which was stilled only by the oil poured by this great statesman upon the troubled waters.

Our president has said that there was a question which none but an angel might ask—but

Fools madly rush where angels fear to tread;

And fools had rushed in and asked whether, after all, there was not a spot upon this sun. It is pretty certain it was not a sun if it didn't have a spot upon it. He had an answer to make to this question. He would ask this enquirer to go with him in the month of October, in the year 1852, just as this great spirit was preparing for its flight to a better world, and witness the scene at Marshfield—that sublime and holy death-bed—and then tell him, who—after a life of three score years and ten—with such vastness of power of mind—having participated in such scenes of mighty effort and complete triumph—with passions commensurate with that great capacity—who ever laid upon his couch to meditate upon his coming dissolution with a consciousness such as we know sustained and supported him. Who of his maligners now could feel

more sure of His rod and His staff in their passage through that dark valley:—If you would know the very heart of hearts of a man—do not ask so much how he lived—but how he died. The sublimest spectacle this continent ever witnessed was the departure of that great soul from its earthly tabernacle—its willing submission of itself into the secure custody of its Creator.

When malignant philanthropy turned up the whites of its eyes in holy horror, he asked it to put its pharisaic finger upon the sentence in Mr. Webster's works, which it would obliterate. When it had attempted this, it had shewn itself as imbecile as it is malignant. For forty years Mr. Webster was before the public—for forty years he was dropping almost oracular sentences—and what scavenger has yet found that passage—or that sentiment in any speech, that is not fit to be transmitted to posterity? Who ever, in their most extravagant complaint against him, have been able to quote the passage, to write down the words uttered by him that were false to freedom, or false to his country or false to himself? General denunciation and general abuse were dealt out freely enough by small politicians and malevolent reformers, but he had never yet known one of them to produce the sentiment uttered by Mr. Webster which any honest man would dare declare to be inconsistent with his own previous character—or his devotion to truth, or to freedom and the great interest of humanity. Often had he asked one and another to leave denunciation and come to specification—but never—never in a single instance—had he been able to find any reformer who

could point to any sentence and say, that is a sentiment which is not consistent with a perfect devotion to truth and to the free institutions of his country.

How remarkable, said Mr. Lord, is one fact. There is no reviler of Mr. Webster—however ultra—however bitter and malignant—who does not feel sure that he is right in any matter of political ethics, if he can find his opinion supported by that of Mr. Webster. With what eagerness is his authority seized upon—what consciousness of impregnability does it give;—and yet, how unwisely used. Nothing with him in politics was merely abstract; with those who carped at him every thing was abstract. His was profound wisdom which viewed subjects in their relations to other subjects;—theirs a wisdom which is incapable of compassing more than one subject. Indeed all that is really of value in these gentlemen's speculations, they take from Mr. Webster himself. It is the excesses, the excrescences, the extremes which are theirs. He didn't run abstraction to these extremes—hence their tears.

And why is it, that they and we have so profound a respect for him? Not because he was great. Mere greatness may inspire wonder, but never respect or love.

The people—the reading—intelligent—thinking people of the country, loved Mr. Webster; not so much because they knew him to be great, as because they believed him to be a good man and a true patriot. They loved him because they saw that the paramount object of his life and his efforts was to strengthen and perpetuate this American Union. Till within the past

quarter of a century the people of this country did not generally fully understand and completely comprehend the true theory of republican liberty. There were notions of Liberty and of the Confederacy of the States, but "our own peculiar American Liberty" the people at large never fully grasped till the simplicity of style of Mr. Webster demonstrated it. It is hardly true to say that the speech of Mr. Hayne was an attack upon the generally received opinions of the times. The notions of the people were then quite vague upon the relations of the State and Federal government—their relative powers and rights—and though a mere boy at the time, Mr. Lord said he could well remember seeing the great speech of Mr. Hayne printed upon satin, with letters of gold, as embodying the popular doctrines of the day. The speech of Mr. Webster, in reply to that, was not at once and universally received as the true theory of the Constitution. It was read and studied. The mass of the people understood it, aye, before the politicians or the statesmen of the day yielded to it, the people sanctioned it. Three years afterwards, Mr. Webster felt it incumbent upon him, even more elaborately and with perhaps even more intellectual ability, to reiterate and reaffirm and re-demonstrate the truths of his Hayne speech; and nobody will fail to remember the satisfaction with which he refers to his former effort, and the almost exultant tone in which he speaks of the fact that the people—the great mass of the American people—had grappled with this monster—nullification—had come then to fully understand it; and that, *therefore*, there would be no danger from it hereafter. How true the

prediction! There is no intelligent man in any of the ordinary walks of life, to-day, who does not fully understand and fully believe the great doctrine of that speech, and where, before had that doctrine been developed, so as to be brought within the reach of the common mind of the country. Well might Mr. Webster reflect upon that speech as the highest triumph in his great career. It settled forever the construction of the Constitution in its most vital part. It alone was sufficient to give immortality to its author, and it is perhaps the only oration since that great *Oration for the crown* which has conferred an honorable immortality upon his rival as well as upon the great orator himself. An intelligent people have grasped the subject—they understand it—they understand the value of the Constitution—and the Union—they not only swear by the Constitution and the Union, but they swear to maintain them against the world. There is no danger to either. They are in the keeping of an intelligent people—and so long as the principles of our peculiar American Liberty—as maintained and illustrated by the subject of our memorial to-night shall be understood by the people of the country, so long shall the Constitution of the Union be perpetuated.

PROF. E. D. SANBORN'S SPEECH.

Dartmouth College has abundant reason to revere the memory of Mr. Webster; and every son of Dartmouth ought to rejoice to speak his praise; not only because his name and fame, as her most distinguished alumnus, reflect honor upon the Institution which gave him his intellectual culture, but because, in the hour of her greatest peril, he plead her cause and saved her from utter extinction. To his peerless eloquence and invincible logic, she owes her present existence. The kind regard which Mr. Webster entertained for his alma mater and his views of what constitutes a thorough Christian education, are very clearly exhibited, in a speech which he addressed to the Faculty and students of Dartmouth College, in 1828. A brief extract will show the tenor of his remarks:

“I am most happy, Mr. President and gentlemen, thus publicly to acknowledge my own deep obligations to the college under your care. I feel that I owe it a debt, which may be acknowledged, indeed, but not repaired. And permit me to express my conviction of the high utility, to individuals and to society, of the vocation which you pursue. If there be anything important in life, it is the business of instruction in religion, in morals and knowledge. He who labors upon objects wholly material, works upon that which, however improved, must one day perish. Nor such is the character, nor such is the destiny of that care which is bestowed on the cultivation of the mind and heart. Here the subject upon which attention is bestowed is immortal, and any benefit conferred upon it equally immortal. Whoever purifies one human

affection, whoever excites one emotion of sincere piety, whoever gives a new and right direction to a human thought, or corrects a single error of the understanding, will already have wrought a work, the consequences of which may extend through ages, which no human enumeration can count and swell into a magnitude which no human estimate can reach."

Mr. Webster's defence of the college, his high appreciation of all liberal learning, and his unvarying friendship for "old Dartmouth," claim for his memory the affectionate homage of all her graduates and friends.

With great propriety did Judge Hopkinson declare that this inscription should be placed over the doors of her public Halls: "Founded by Eleazer Wheelock, refounded by Daniel Webster."

But deeply indebted as the college is to Mr. Webster, our common country, as it seems to me, owes him equal gratitude; and,—"*parvis componere magnis*," we might write as a fitting introduction to our excellent Constitution, "Established by the wisdom and labors of George Washington, preserved by the genius and eloquence of Daniel Webster."

The very maxims so appropriately selected from his speeches, to adorn these walls, give strength and permanency to our glorious Union. Like the strong iron clamps and melted lead of the old Roman builders, "*nec severus Uncus abest liquidumoe plumbum*," they bind together the separate political blocks which constitute the mightiest political edifice of this or any other age; and will continue to do so, till our master builders bring forth the top stone with shoutings.

But the public life and services of Mr. Webster are

known and read of all men. They have been sufficiently discussed, on other occasions, and especially, this evening, by the most illustrious orators of our country. It is not for me to follow in their steps, “non passibus æquis.” This field has already been reaped, and the most that I could expect to do would be to follow, as a gleaner, and gather a few straws to weave a rustic garland for the tomb of departed greatness. But there are some lighter traits of his character which, perhaps, on this festive occasion I may be permitted to sketch — such as do not strike the spectator of forensic or legislative debates.

“The meaning of an extraordinary man,” said Sidney Smith, “is that he is *eight* men, not one man; that he has as much wit as if he had no sense, and as much sense as if he had no wit; that his conduct is as judicious as if he were the dullest of men, and his imagination as brilliant as though he were irretrievably ruined.” Every truly great man is many-sided, or, to use a common phrase, “*myriad-minded* ;” therefore different observers of him give a different account of him, according to the angle at which he is viewed, or the side on which he is approached.

Mr. Webster’s mind was of this description. He had intellectual material enough for a whole household, aye, for a whole colony of ordinary men, women and children, so as to give to each his portion in due season. Those who met him only on public occasions, where the proprieties of time and place required a dignified and stately demeanor, pronounced him cold and formal, though courteous and polite. Those who listened to the loftiest strains of his eloquence, “when

public bodies were to be addressed on momentous occasions," were struck with awe at the majesty of his person, the severity of his logic, and the overwhelming power of his eloquence — or, rather, of what he denominates "action, noble, sublime, godlike action." To such men, he appeared to stand on an inaccessible height above them, and not to belong to the ordinary level of human sympathies. Let the same men listen to his calm, unimpassioned arguments before a learned Bench, where every sentence was fit for the press as it fell from his lips, and all his words were "like apples of gold in pictures of silver," always more weighty and enduring than they seemed to be, and they would pronounce him tame and prosy. Sometimes the eager spectator, who had come a great distance to be excited and amused, after listening to one of his ablest arguments went away disappointed, and like those who looked upon the simple dress and quiet manners of the noble old Roman statesman, Agricola, demanded the proofs of his greatness.

Their conviction was that he had made no extraordinary effort; that any one might do as well; but let the same critic *read* his argument if he be an intelligent man. He declares — "*Ut sibi quis speret idem; sudet multum, frustra que laboret ausus idem.*"

He was always appropriate to the occasion; never above it; never below it. This is one of the most remarkable features of his character. He could adapt himself to all times and places; to all ages and sexes; to all classes and conditions of men. He knew how to discourse, with equal propriety, to the child and the sage; to the unlettered rustic and the erudite man of

science. He never obtruded his own opinions upon others, or attempted to controvert theirs. He had no hobbies of his own to advocate; indeed he did not consult his own taste in selecting topics of conversation. The pleasure of others was the law of his social intercourse. With the divine he talked of theology; with the physician, of medicine; with the scholar, of literature. This he did as much from principle as from politeness. He wished to be well informed on all the great subjects of human interest. His views on this subject are admirably illustrated in a letter to a young lawyer just entering upon his profession. His letter was a reply to a declaration of the young attorney, "that he intended to devote himself wholly to his profession," and that he read few books except those that related to the law. His answer was:

"Your notions [about your studies] are quite right, as applicable to your own condition. You must study practical things. You are in the situation of the "*haud facile emergunt*," and must try all you can to get your head above water. Why should you botanize who have no right in the earth except a right to tread upon it! This is all very well. I thought so at your age; and therefore, studied nothing but law and politics. I advise you to take the same course; yet still a little time, have a few "*horas subsecivas*" in which to cultivate liberal knowledge. It will turn to account even practically. If on a given occasion, a man can gracefully and without the air of a pedant, show a little more knowledge than the occasion requires, the world will give him credit for eminent attainments. It is an honest quackery. I have practised it, and sometimes with success. It is something like studying an extempore speech, but even that done with address has

its effect. There is no doubt, at least, that the circle of useful knowledge is much broader than it can be proved to be in relation to any particular subject *a priori*. We find connections and coincidences, helps and succours where we did not expect them. I have never learned anything which I wish to forget except how badly some people have behaved, and I every day find on almost every subject, that I wish I had more knowledge than I possess, seeing that I could produce it, if not for use yet for *effect*."

After the delivery of his discourse before the Historical Society, in New York, I met him, at the house of a mutual friend. He called me to a private room and presented to me some copies of his address, saying, at the same time, "what do you think of it, Mr. Professor?" I replied: I have been both gratified and *surprised* by its perusal; gratified at the generous appreciation of ancient authors, as they passed in review; and surprised at your familiarity with their individual peculiarities and excellencies. I did not suppose that, engrossed as you are, in public and professional duties, you would be so well "posted up" in classic lore. Then he remarked: I have not been an *idle* man; I have sometimes used books, and sometimes men. What I had not leisure to acquire by study, I have often gained by conversation. Every literary and scientific gentleman, here present, who has enjoyed his pleasant society, will understand the full import of these words. They are happily illustrated by an incident related of him by the late Dr. Hall of Washington. He was an eminent geologist. When Mr. Webster was a student this science was

unknown in our country. It grew up entirely while his mind was engrossed by public and professional duties. It became so prominent as often to force itself upon his notice. He wished to obtain some just notions of its leading principles. He had no time to use books; he therefore used men. He commenced with Dr. Hall. He called on him, one day, at his cabinet, and said to him: "Dr. Hall, you have here a great variety of specimens of the rocks composing the crust of our globe; now I want you to show me their relative position.—Please to take these fragments and build for me a little world on geological principles." The professor was, of course, happy to display his knowledge to such a pupil, and proceeded to lecture, for an hour, to an audience, "fit though few," or rather "sole," possessing, perhaps, as much intelligence as any crowded assembly he had ever addressed.

Young children, too, found in him a boon companion. He was eminently attractive to children; and there are no better judges of kindness and sympathy than they. Their feelings move them, apparently by instinct, to cling to those who naturally take pleasure in their society. So the vine clings, with caressing tendrils, to the living tree; but train it against a marble wall, and it never aspires; but falling backward trails along the ground. There was a fascination in Mr. Webster's eye and in the tones of his voice which made children seek his caresses. They followed him, as he paced the floor, in meditation, and hung upon the skirts of his coat; and when he turned and snapped at them, showing all his white teeth, they clapped their hands and shouted as they scampered away.

to some dark nook, ready to renew their attack as soon as his back was turned. His little grand-children used to stand upon his knees, place their hands on the top of his head and kiss his forehead. He was delighted. It seemed, he said, like a heavenly benediction from these little innocents.

The late Webster Kelley, Esq., informed me that when he was ten or twelve years of age, Mr. Webster came to his father's house and proposed an excursion to the top of Keasearge, which they accomplished on the following day. As he came along side of the boy he said:—"Well, my son, what are you studying at school?" "Virgil," he replied. "At what point in the epic?" "In the ninth book." "What is the situation of the parties?" "Æneas," said the boy, "is gone away in search of aid. The Trojans are fighting Turnus, and I suppose he will kill them all or drive them out of Italy." "Oh! no," said Mr. Webster, "Æneas will take care of him." "But," said the boy, "I thought he was more famed for his piety than his valor." "You are mistaken, my lad," said he, "he was the greatest warrior the Trojans had except Hector. He is now absent; when he returns he will destroy Turnus and his army, and the Trojans will settle in Italy." During the whole time he kept up these pleasing and instructive allusions to the studies of the boy, and left an impression on his mind which was never effaced. When they reached the top of the mountain they seated themselves for a lunch. Mr. Webster cut a piece of ham and offered it to the boy. He hesitated to take it in his fingers. "Oh! take it, my son," said Mr. Webster,

“fingers were made before forks. Iulus never saw a fork in his life.” On such occasions he was full of life and glee. He ran and leaped and shouted, making the woods ring, too, with his merry peals of laughter.

The same party that climbed Keasearge, on another occasion ascended Mount Washington together. In the morning, Mr. Webster ran, sung and shouted, and seemed as playful as a child. Ethan Crawford, with a sort of parental gravity, said to him—“You will sing another song, sir, before night.” But the fatigue of climbing did not abate his cheerfulness and love of fun; on the contrary, his spirits rose with the elevation of the mountain. This natural buoyancy of spirits was only repressed by public cares. Public life made him grave and taciturn in mixed society. His brother, Ezekiel was cautious and deliberate. He was less accessible to strangers, but eminently social with friends. It was characteristic of both brothers to discourse in a free and familiar manner on important topics to the members of their respective families. Daniel used to say—“When I can present a matter to Ezekiel and get his deliberate opinion upon it, I am sure to be right.” Neither of the brothers indulged in repartees or jeux d’esprits in debate. Occasionally, however, they admitted a playful remark into their discussions. When Ezekiel Webster was in full practice at the bar, he was employed to defend the will of Roger Perkins of Hopkinton. The physician made affidavit that the testator was struck with death when he signed his will. Mr. Webster subjected his testimony to a most searching examination; showing, by

quoting medical authorities, that doctors disagree as to the precise moment when a dying man is struck with death ; some affirming that it is at the commencement of the fatal disease ; others at its climax, and others still affirm that we begin to die as soon as we are born. “ I should like to know,” said Mr. Sullivan, “ what doctor, maintains that theory.” “ Dr. Watts,” said Mr. Webster, with great gravity —

“ The moment we begin to live
We all begin to die.”

The reply convulsed the Court and audience with laughter.

Numerous letters written by these brothers, now in existence, and which are soon to see the light, furnish abundant proof of their mutual confidence, and particularly of the high estimate which Daniel set upon his brother's advice. In a letter dated April, 1804, Eze-kiel gives his opinion on a question proposed by Daniel, as follows:—“ Agreeably to your injunction, I have thought and meditated upon your letter for three days and for no inconsiderable portion of three nights, and I now give you the result as freely as I earnestly wish your welfare. I am decidedly opposed to your going to New York, and for several reasons.

The expensiveness of a journey to, and a residence in that place, is with me, a material objection. “ Secondly, the embarrassments to which you will be subjected, without finances to assist or patronage to support. Thirdly, I fear the climate would be fatal to your constitution. I have now told you what I would *not*

have you do; and I also tell you what I desire you to do. I would have you *decamp* immediately from Salisbury, with all your baggage, and march directly to this place." Then he goes on to state the reasons for this opinion which he had maturely formed. They were substantially the same which ultimately influenced Mr. Webster to remove to Boston.

Daniel's estimate of his brother's endowments may be learned from the following extract from a letter dated April 25, 1800:—"You tell me that you have difficulties to encounter which I know nothing of. What do you mean, Ezekiel? Do you mean to flatter? If so, be assured, you greatly mistake. Therefore, for the future, say in your letters to me, 'I am superior to you in natural endowments; I will know more, in one year, than you do now; and more in six, than you *ever* will.' I should not resent this language; I should be very well pleased in hearing it; but, be assured, as mighty as you are, your great puissance should never gain a victory without a contest." Whenever the brothers met, in after years, and in better circumstances, they were accustomed to rehearse, with great glee, the trials and hardships of their youth.

On one occasion, when Ezekiel was on a visit to his brother, in Boston, after rising from a sumptuous dinner, Ezekiel turned to his brother and said, with great solemnity, "Daniel, do you think we shall live till morning?" "Why? What do you mean?" said Daniel. "Don't you remember," said Ezekiel, "how, when we were boys, at a certain time, we had no meal in the house, and could get no corn ground, and our

mother fed us on potatoes and milk; and after the first supper, going up to bed, you turned round upon the broad stair, and asked, with great seriousness, "Ezekiel, do you think we shall live till morning?" "Why?" said I. "Only think what stuff we have been eating."

Money, so difficult then to be earned or hired, infinitely more so, than it is now, occupied many of the thoughts and plans of these young men. Daniel, in one of his early letters, intimated that he should soon forward a small sum to Ezekiel, then in college. He replied: — "The very hint seemed to dispel the gloom that was thickening around me. It seemed like a momentary flash that suddenly bursts through a night of clouds, or, as Young says: —

‘So look’d in chaos, the first beam of light.’ ”

In 1802, Daniel writes to Ezekiel, with reference to funds: — "I have now by me two cents in lawful Federal money. Next week I will send them, if they be all; they will buy a pipe — with a pipe you can smoke — smoking inspires wisdom; wisdom is allied to fortitude; from fortitude, it is but one step to stoicism, and stoicism never pants for this world's goods. So, perhaps, my two cents, by this process, may put you quite at ease about cash."

In another letter he writes, in parody of an old song: —

Fol de rol, dol de dol di dol;
I'll never make money my idol,
For away our dollars will fly all;

With my friend and my pitcher
 I'm twenty times richer
 Than if I made money my idol,
 Fol de dol, dol de dol, di dol.

In 1805 he had ordered some law books which he deemed essential to his professional success; but the money to pay the price of them could not be found by the agency of both the brothers; he therefore wrote to Ezekiel, then in Boston, as follows: — “As yet, I find it not in my power to procure any money for the purpose of paying for my books. I therefore am under the necessity of requesting you to make my peace with Mr. H. Parker. Give him something if aught you have to give, to indemnify him for his trouble and expense, and ask him to put the books again on his shelves; or, if anybody in Boston is fool enough to lend you the money, please to buy them for me.” The generosity of the bookseller, however, enabled him to keep them.

In the same letter he remarks: — “Some little business is done here and I get a part of it. In time, perhaps, I shall gratify my moderate and rational wishes.” Previous to this date, it appears that he had once procured the purchase money of the books and lost it by his agent. He wrote respecting the loss: — “It is utterly out of my power to repair the loss of eighty-five dollars. I hired that money of a friend in Salisbury, and cannot, as I know, hire again a like sum.”

In a letter to a classmate in 1803, he says: — “Zeke is at Sanbornton; he comes home once in a

while, sits down before the kitchen fire, begins to poke and rattle the andirons ; I know what is coming, and am mute. At length he puts his feet up into the mouth of the oven, draws his right eyebrow up upon his forehead, and begins a very pathetic lecture on the evils of poverty. It is like church service ; he does all the talking, and I only respond, *amen* ; AMEN ! ”

In his early days Mr. Webster wrote some very good poetry. In one instance, in particular, he addressed some pretty stanzas, to a lady who offered to make him a purse for *three* verses of poetry. The last stanza of the three written to secure the purse is as follows : —

And thus Parnassian gifts are sold,
The better and the worse ;
Pope wrote for bags of glittering gold,
I for an *empty* purse.

Then he addressed a poem, of considerable length, in a different metre, to the lady who made the purse. From this we select two stanzas. The purse itself he thus apostrophises : —

By avarice unsoiled, may'st thou ever abide,
And thy strings against the price of corruption be tied ;
May thy owner, from sorrow, its pittance ne'er squeeze,
Nor tarnish thy lustre with ill-gotten fees.

Yet may fortune supply thee with plentiful store,
And the world of its cash grant enough and no more,
While thy contents with children of want I divide,
Nor half the last cent to a friend be denied.

The address to Daniel Abbott, Esq., who was the bearer of the poetic epistle, was as follows: —

When Allan Ramsay once sent greeting
 A sonnet to his Miss,
 He told the bearer at their meeting
 For his reward to take a kiss.
 Now Daniel, though you love not pelf,
 You'll surely like so sweet a fee;
 You'll find a dozen for yourself,
 Yet if you please take one for me.

Some of his early contributions to the public journals exhibit more than ordinary poetic talent. We will quote one little morceau, from the Dartmouth Gazette, dated July 24, 1802: —

[For the Dartmouth Gazette, July 24, 1802.]

“AH ME AND WAS IT I?”

Damon the handsome and the young,
 Before me breathed his sighs;
 Love gave the rhetoric to his tongue
 The lustre to his eyes.
 A nymph, he said, had waked a flame,
 That never more would die.
 And softly whispered out her name—
 Ah me! and was it I?
 With joy, I heard his tale reveal'd,
 Yet like a gairish fool
 The rapture which I felt, concealed;
 For woman loves to rule.
 Not all his vows nor all his tears,
 One love-like smile could gain;
 I mock'd his hopes, increas'd his fears,

And triumph'd in his pain.
 At length forlorn he turn'd away,
 Nor more for me would sigh;
 But left me to remorse a prey —

Ah me and was it I?

ICABUS.

It was quite common at dinner parties for gentlemen who knew Mr. Webster's inimitable power of narration in giving grace and point to the happy turns of an anecdote, to call on him to repeat some favorite story. At Washington, I heard him relate an incident in the life of Randolph with great effect. The dates and references cannot accurately be recalled, but sometime during the first years of Mr. Webster's service, in Congress, Mr. Calhoun was speaking upon a proposition to require all the government dues to be paid in silver and gold. He was opposed to the measure; argued its inconvenience to the agents of the government with great ability, and incidentally asserted that in no instance had our government ever resorted to such a measure. Mr. Webster, sitting by Randolph's side, said to him: — "He is mistaken on that point; for there is a post office law in the year 17 — requiring deputies to receive only silver and gold in payment of postage." "Is there such a law?" said Randolph, with great eagerness; "show it to me." Mr. Webster stepped to the Clerk's desk and selected the volume of United States laws which contained the enactment alluded to, and opening to the very page where it was found, gave the book to Randolph. He studied it attentively, noted the page, chapter and section. The moment Mr. Calhoun took his seat, Randolph rose, and in his shrill and harsh

tones, shouted: — “Mr. Speaker,” and gaining his attention, he proceeded to say: — “Nil admirari, is one of the beautiful and sententious maxims of Horace which I learned in my boyhood, and to this day I have been wont to believe in its truth and to follow it in practice. *But I give it up.* It is no longer a rule of my life. *I do wonder and am utterly astonished* that a man who assumes to legislate for the country should be so utterly ignorant of its existing laws. The gentleman mentions that the bill before the House introduces a new provision into our legislation. He does not know that it has ever been incorporated into any statute by any Congress in our country’s history, when it has been a common usage almost from the infancy of our nation. Macgruder,” screamed the excited orator to one of the clerks, “Macgruder, take vol.*** of the United States laws, page 150, chapter 16, section 10, and read.” The clerk read: — “Be it enacted, &c., that all the dues of postal department shall be paid in silver and gold,” &c. “Witness,” said Randolph, “the gentleman’s innocent simplicity, his utter want of acquaintance with the laws of the land for which he affects to be a leading legislator. Now, Mr. Speaker, I was educated to know the laws of my country. The law just recited has been familiar to me from childhood; indeed, I cannot remember the time when I did not know it; yet simple and elementary as it is, the gentleman, in his superficial study of our laws, has overlooked it.”

Richard M. Johnson and Mr. Webster, though opposed to each other on political opinions, were always on good terms, as private friends. When Mr. Johnson

was Vice-President, some private bill was before the Senate, upon the merits of which Mr. Webster had conferred with Mr. Johnson, and inferred from his conversation that he approved of its provisions. It happened, when the vote was taken upon its passage, that the Senate was equally divided. Of course the decisive vote was given by the Vice-President. He, much to Mr. Webster's surprise, voted against it. After the rejection of the bill, Mr. Webster stepped up to the desk of the presiding officer, and said, softly: — "Mr. Johnson, I rather relied on your vote to carry this measure. I feel a little disappointed at your vote. I have always found you true to your professions on other occasions." "Oh," said Mr. Johnson, "we all mistake sometimes. We are frail and erring creatures, liable to get out of the way. The world, you know, *wabbles* a little."

Both the brothers were distinguished for their fine social qualities. In no place was Mr. Daniel Webster more attractive than at his own fireside. Here he showed that genuine wit described by Sidney Smith, which "penetrates through the coldness and awkwardness of society, gradually bringing men nearer together, and, like the combined force of wine and oil, giving every man a glad heart and a shining countenance." This trait of character, so amiable and winning, he inherited from his honored father. Writing to his son in 1840, he says: — "I believe we are all indebted to my father's mother for a large portion of the little sense and character which belong to us. Her name was Susannah Bachelder; she was the daughter of a clergyman, and a woman of uncommon strength of understanding."

All the letters of Mr. Webster are models of epistolary composition, simple, graceful, pertinent, showing the right words in the right places, and abounding in kindness even to his foes. Mr. Webster early made it a principle, in writing, to put nothing upon paper which might not be printed the next day without injury to himself or others. He followed this rule so implicitly, that if all his letters should be published to-morrow, no man would have reason to complain that the character of the dead was injured, or the feelings of the living wounded. His self-control in speaking of his political opponents, even of those who had wronged him, grievously wronged him, and in refuting their charges, is quite as remarkable as any feature of his character. It is scarcely probable to so many letters, essays and speeches—covering so long a period of violent political controversy—can be found in the world's history so free from personal attacks and unkind cuts as the unpublished correspondence and speeches of Mr. Webster. He does not even “damn by faint praise,” or “hesitate dislike,” when he deals with an adversary. He yields to him all the advantage which nature, education, or private character may give him, and advances to the conflict without ambuscade or false lures, in the open field, with no other weapons but sound argument and brilliant oratory. His forthcoming correspondence will show Mr. Webster, in his letters, as he thought, spoke, and acted in private life. Every phase of his character will be exhibited. The epistles to his brother and classmates, and the correspondence of his student life, will show where he wandered in the realms of science and literature, what authors he chose for his private

teachers, and how he moulded and matured his polished English style. His early struggle with poverty, his warm friendship, which terminated only at his death, are there depicted with the vividness of real life.

Mr. Webster's works will constitute a rich legacy to coming generations, which, unlike all other estates, will be enhanced in value, by minute division and individual appropriation.

The Hon. George T. Davis of Greenfield, was next called upon, but he declined speaking, saying that his substitute, Hon. William G. Bates of Westfield, had a written speech (laughter) which he was anxious to deliver. Mr. Bates said he had no speech; but he wished to offer the following resolutions: —

Resolved, That a committee of three persons be appointed by the Chairman of this meeting, to notify a meeting of the friends of Mr. Webster, to assemble in the city of Boston, on the 18th of January, 1857.

Resolved, That the persons present at this meeting resolve themselves into an association to inculcate and carry out the principles as to the importance and perpetuity of the Union, and the great national questions which Mr. Webster, by his life and speeches, so eloquently enforced and illustrated.

These resolutions were unanimously adopted, and the Chairman said he would take time to appoint the committee.

Adolphus Davis, Esq., gave the following toast: —

Cape Cod College — the plough handles — May she conceive once more, and bring forth another General!

The festivities ended at twelve o'clock. The Banquet was a demonstration worthy of the Birth-Day of Daniel Webster. There was one man absent — by reason of severe illness — who was greatly missed. The compiler of this pamphlet was permitted to know

that he made more than common exertion to be present on the occasion, and sincerely desired to unite with Mr. Everett and the other distinguished and accomplished gentlemen — who spoke during the evening — in paying, once again, his public tribute to the memory of Mr. Webster. Had Mr. Choate been in any condition of health to justify the risk of his attendance, he would have been at the dinner, and would have added another to the series of his masterly eulogies of the great statesman — not inferior in freshness and grandeur, we may venture to say,—to any of his previous performances.

Letters were received from United States Senators Crittenden of Kentucky, Bell of Tennessee, Rusk of Texas, Cass of Michigan, and others.

We insert here, the following letter from Gen. CASS: —

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10, 1856.

Dear Sir,—I cannot accept your invitation to meet the friends of Mr. Webster on the 18th inst., the anniversary of his birth-day, in order to interchange recollections of the patriot, and orator and statesman, because my public duties will necessarily detain me here. To these and other high claims to distinction in life, and to fame in death, he added for me the associations of early youth, and the kindness and friendship of mature age, as well as of declining years. I have read with deep and mournful interest the extract from his letter to you, which you were good enough to inclose, written at the termination of the struggle which attended the compromise measure of 1850, in which he says that “General Cass, General Rusk, Mr. Dickenson, &c., have agreed that since our entrance upon the stage of public action, no crisis has occurred fraught with so much danger to the institutions of the country as that through which it has just

passed, and that, in all human probability, no other of so great moment will occur again during the remainder of our lives, and therefore we will hereafter be friends, let our political differences on minor subjects be what they may." This tribute of affectionate regard to his coadjutors in a common struggle against a common peril, from him, whose services were so pre-eminent, will be cherished, I am sure, with proud recollection by all of us, to whom these words of kindness now come from the tomb. You say that this engagement, on the part of our lamented friend, was, to your personal knowledge, faithfully kept. It was so. I know it, and rejoice at it. And I believe I may add, with not less assurance, that the conviction you express of the same fidelity to this bond of union and esteem on the part of those who co-operated with him, is equally well founded, and that, though death has dissolved the connection, yet his name and his fame are dear to them, and will ever find in them zealous advocates and defenders.

The grave closed upon this great statesman and American before another crisis fraught with evil passions and imminent dangers had come to shake his confidence in the permanency of the wise and healing measures of 1850. What he did not live to see, his associates in that work of patriotism, the whole country indeed now sees, that we have again fallen upon evil times, and that the fountains of agitation are broken up, and the waters are out over the land. There is no master spirit to say Peace be still, and to be heard and heeded. Our trust is in the people of this great republican confederation, and yet more in the God of their fathers and their own God, who guided and guarded us through the dreary wilderness of the revolution, and brought us to a condition of freedom and prosperity, of which the history of the world furnishes no previous example. Would that the eloquent accents, which are now mute in death; would that the burning words of him whose birth you propose to commemorate, and of his great compeer of

the West, though dead, yet living in the hearts of his countrymen, could now be heard warning the American people of the dangers impending over them, and calling them to the support of that Union and Constitution which have done so much for them and for their fathers, and are destined to do so much more for them and for their children, if not sacrificed upon the altar of a new Moloch, whose victims may be the institutions of our country. If this sectional agitation goes on, this ever pressing effort to create and perpetuate diversions between the North and the South, we shall find that we cannot live together in peace, and shall have to live together in war. And what such a condition would bring with it between independent countries, thus situated, once friends, but become enemies, the impressive narrative of the fate of the Grecian republics teaches us as plainly as the future can be taught by the lessons of the past. Your own state took a glorious part in the war of independence, and it contributed ably and faithfully to the adoption of the Constitution. Her great deeds and great names are inscribed upon the pages of our history, and upon the hearts of our countrymen. How would he who loved and served her so well, and whose love and service were so honorable to her — how would he deplore the position she has assumed towards the government of our common country, and the solemn provisions of its Constitution, were he now living to witness the triumph of sectional feelings over the dictates of duty and patriotism? Let us hope that this is but a temporary delusion, and that it will soon pass away, leaving our institution unscathed, and the fraternal tie which still binds us together unimpaired.

I am, dear sir, with much regard, respectfully yours,

LEWIS CASS.

PETER HARVEY, Esq., Boston.

LETTER FROM COL. BULLOCK.

WORCESTER, 18th January, 1856.

My Dear Sir,—I regret that in consequence of the state of my health I must forego the pleasure of my engagement to be with the friends of our great departed statesman this evening. The occasion will be one of intense and gratifying interest, and it only remains for me to express to you my deepest sympathy in all the reminiscences of the hour. Almost as if he were now in the midst of us,—so gently has time as yet dealt with our memory,—we can recall him, with his august form, his kind, parental eye, his genial smile, or in his solemn mien, as he was wont to appear among you in Boston, in the scenes of his forensic triumph and social pastime; or at Marshfield, whither he many a time repaired, upon his broad acres, and by the side of the sea, to seek a refuge from the cares of state. And yet, though it is not difficult to invest the imagination with his ideal presence, there is, after all, abundant and painful evidence in the present distracted condition of public affairs that the great genius of DANIEL WEBSTER, the fullness of his wisdom, and the compass of his patriotism, have departed. Never were they more needed than now, and at no time has there been a greater exigency for his instructions and his counsels. But though he has gone, his works have not followed him. The value of his written and spoken words, and above all, of his patriotic example in every emergency which threatened our common welfare, remains undimmed by the passage of time, and will receive additional lustre with every year that sets its seal upon his tomb.

It is in this view of his character and his services, that we need not regret that Mr. Webster was not chosen President of the United States; for he will be the teacher of Presidents and Cabinets while the Union shall last. We need not regard that to his head was not assigned a place in that charmed circle of

medallions which represents all the Presidents and hangs upon the walls of so many edifices ; for rather, far rather, would we have it stand out isolated upon the canvas, in its own classic and unshackled proportions, awakening the remembrance of his more than heroic deeds, and challenging the admiration of patriotic and intelligent men, from generation to generation.

Let us, then, my dear sir, bring the lessons which he gave us while living, still closer to our hearts, and cherish his memory by following his example and instructions. Let us as citizens walk in the national pathway which he marked out, illumined as it is by the noblest eloquence of modern times, and terminating in the permanent peace of this Union. Whatever invitations may beckon us in any other direction, — whatever temporary issues, or transient excitements, or sectional animosities, may spring up around us and allure us elsewhere, let it be be our resolute purpose to adhere sternly to the Constitution, which, as it is by its origin forever associated with the names of Hamilton and Madison, will in its beneficent development and progress bear to the latest posterity the renown of HIM whose name will be this evening upon all our lips and in all our hearts. In this spirit, though I cannot be with you, I pledge to you my hearty co-operation in whatever shall do honor to the name of WEBSTER ; “ a great and venerated name, a name which has made this country respected in every other on the globe.”

I remain, very truly, your ob't serv't,

A. H. BULLOCK.

PETER HARVEY, Esq., Boston.

CONTENTS.

Preface	3
The names of the subscribers to the dinner	5
The dinner and the hall decorations	9
Prayer of Rev. Chandler Robbins	11
Speech of Hon. Edward Everett	12
" of Hon. George S. Hillard	41
Poem of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes	49
Speech of Gen. Nye, of New York	52
" Hon. Robert H. Shenck, of Ohio	58
" Hon. George Ashmun, of Springfield	60
" Hon. Henry C. Deming, of Connecticut	63
" Hon. Otis P. Lord, of Salem	65
" Prof. E. D. Sanborn, of Dartmouth College	71
Remarks of Hon. George T. Davis, of Greenfield, and resolutions of Hon. William G. Bates, of Westfield	90
Letter of Gen. Cass	91
" Hon. A. H. Bullock	94





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